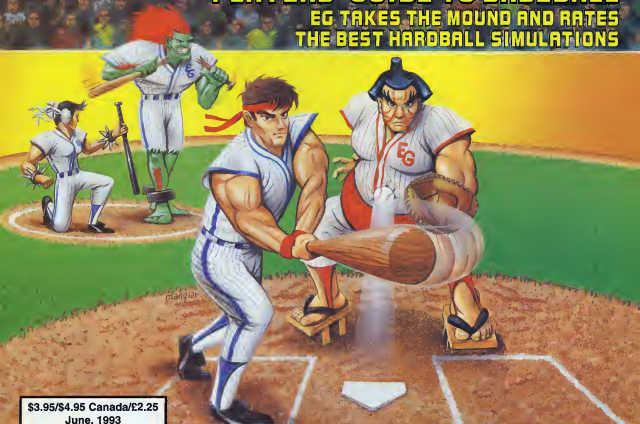


ELECTRONIC GAMES

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REVIEWED INSIDE

SPOT-STARFOX-P.T.O.-DREAM PROBE
 S KINGDOM-AMERICAN GLADIATORS
 BETRAYAL AT KRONDOR-ULTRABOTS

GREED IS GOOD.



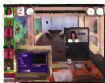
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Monster robots are attacking George's home town, Orbit City! He gets help from Jane, Judy, Elroy and even Astro in his attempt to stop the invasion and turn the robots into tin cans!



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About the art— We at **EG** would like to thank the following artists for their contributions to this issue:

Jeff Mangat — Cover
 Eric Curry — All department logos, and various photography
 Cliff Apple — EG Interview
 Jeff Lynch — Game Sounds
 Bill Veen — Players' Guide to Baseball Cover

The guys from Street Fighter dropped by the EG office last week, and we got together for a little baseball. The winner was the blue team, not only because Bluebon ate all of the beans, two editors, and a Slack. And please don't write asking about the Street Fighter baseball game! There isn't one.

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Screen shots shown are from the Super NES version of the game.

The name of the game

ocean

Ocean of America, Inc.
1855 O'Toole Ave., Suite D-102
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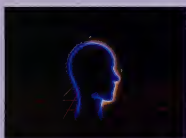
GAME BOY



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Family™**

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ELECTRONIC GAMES

JUNE, 1993

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 9

A DECKER PUBLICATIONS, INC. PERIODICAL

The First Printed Editorial Conference

A phrase often found in editorials is: "It's your magazine." Sometimes, "your" is in bold for emphasis. That line makes me sick. It's editoresse for: "I don't have a clue about this magazine. If it stinks, it's your fault."

There have been electronic gaming magazines like that. They're produced by cynical pros who work from press releases, docs, and the copy on packages.

This isn't one of them. I have never worked with a more committed cadre of electronic gamers. They argue every story passionately, work long hours, and then go home to play. Then, they go out to an arcade....

So we had plenty of ideas when we started **EG**. Sales, reader response, and advertising are rising, so I figure we're on the right track. We want to do a magazine for sophisticated gamers who want incisive, in-depth coverage.

Magazines are a risky business. Now that **EG** has carved a niche for itself, though, it faces new perils. Some magazines start off like a rocket, but cruise into the comfort zone after a few issues.

EG isn't that kind of magazine, either. We want to grow and change, so that **EG** stays the most exciting and informative gaming magazine. That's why I'm inviting you to the first all-print editorial conference. Come in, take a seat, grab a cup of coffee or a soft drink, and let's get started.

Our esteemed publisher wants us to earn our paychecks by making some improvements. Let's start with what we've done so far. We cut the type size and gave each review more space. Now the reviews are more detailed and have more and larger screen shots, too.

We've toughened the ratings, cut some extraneous news, eliminated strategy, added a two-page Japan spread, introduced columns on modern and educational gaming, and refined "The Jury" contest.

That's a good start. I think we can do better. I'm ready to hear your ideas.

What's that, Bill? The column heads are dull? Juli and Marc are busy making a new set for our next issue.

How about Hotline, Joyce? Yes, I think a complete facelift is on the way. I never liked that black background with floating white boxes, anyway. Those time capsules give a nice perspective, so try to include one every month.

Are you grumbling about the ratings, again, Marc? I don't blame you. It's the same old thing. Let's try to develop a more meaningful set of ratings. And, Juli, couldn't the ratings box look a little more attractive? I thought so.

Stop tapping your watch, Ross. I know everyone has stuff to do. We'll break this soon. We've accomplished a lot for one editorial session. There are still some things I want you all to think about. That includes you editorial assistants sitting in for the first time. We've all got to pitch in if we want **EG** to reach the top.

There are some things I haven't decided yet, and I need your input. How much coverage should we give computer games? A lot of them will go cartridge and/or CD eventually, but should we wait until that happens, or cover potential biggies when we find out about them? Should we continue the Players Guides, or is that too much on one subject in an issue?

I'll be waiting for your opinion about these three issues—or anything else about the magazine. Send your editorial memo to me at: 330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107. I'll present your suggestions at the next editorial conference.

Thanks for participating, everybody!

— Arnie Katz

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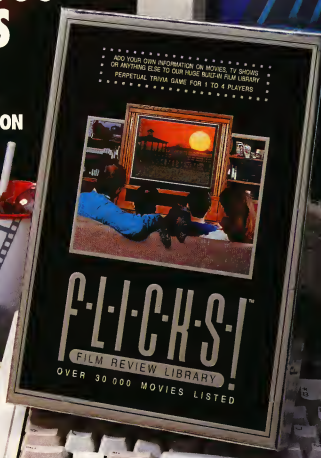
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FEEDBACK

Letters From Our Readers

Whither Amiga?

As an Amiga user, I was concerned when I read the article, "Computer Entertainment 1992" (EG, Feb. 93). Some statements were made about the Amiga which are simply misleading.

The Amiga hurt by lagging hardware penetration? (Nearly 4 million sold worldwide! The Amiga Market has over 650 companies that have developed over 3500 products that support it.) Rampant piracy? (Piracy is a serious problem on all computer platforms! There's as much piracy, if not more, on PC compatibles than on the Amiga.) Virtually retired from the home entertainment market? (The majority of the best games are also available on the Amiga! Here's a few from the article: **Civilization, Castles II, Perfect General, Links, Wing Commander, Indy Jones Atlantis, Star Control II, Legend of Kyrandia, A-Train.**)

This article tends to imply that these games are available "only on the PC," which is unfair to Amiga users. It also implies that the Amiga is no longer a viable game platform, which is absurd. Yes, the main push... is on PC compatibles, but that does not mean we should count other machines out.

Jay Walden
Tampa, FL

Jay, your voice echoes other letter writers who are partisan to favored platforms for both computer games and video games (see next letter). But the worldwide sales figures you cite are not reflected among game players in the U.S. The game market for the Amiga is much better supported overseas, especially in Europe. Still, nobody said the Amiga was gone. Check our pages—we do still review games for the Amiga (e.g., **Lords of Time** in that same issue).

Missing Lynx

I own a Lynx, and I have a complaint. Why are you ignoring this system? After six issues we have yet to see a single Lynx game reviewed. And although Lynx games aren't released in rapid succes-

sion like other systems, this past year has seen the introduction of dozens of new titles—**NFL Football, Shadow of the Beast, Fussball/Soccer, Joust, Rampart, Pinball Jam and Kung Fu**, to name a few. If you've played the system, you will know it can hold its own against the Game Boy and Game Gear.

Mark Androvich
Ventura, CA

We have nothing against the Lynx, Mark, and in fact we have some Lynx fans here at EG. But games must be made available to us in time to review them by or before their release date, and it doesn't happen often with Lynx carts.

It's an Art

I enjoyed your review of **Ancient Art of War in the Skies** (EG Feb. 93). Being one of the designers, I would like to elaborate on one point that was made. Your reviewer thought that since dogfighting and bombing are less than 100 years old, the word "Ancient" is inappropriate. I can see his point, but that is not how the title was intended. As he noted, this game is the third in a series (**The Ancient Art of War, The Ancient Art of War at Sea**). The strategy in all three is based on the book **The Art of War** by Sun Tzu which was written 2400 years ago. It is the "Art of War" that is ancient, not "War in the Skies."

By the way, do we hold the record for the most words in the title of a computer game?

Barry Murry, Evryware
Olympia, WA

But Barry, if our reviewer, Bill Kunkel, read the title the other way, what's to prevent others from seeing it that way too? We suspect he wasn't really confused about it, though—any journalist's eye tends to catch ambiguities. As to title length, close but no cigar, given multi-part titles like Sierra's **Space Quest IV: Roger Wilco and the Time Rippers** orSSI's **AD&D Unlimited Adventures: Build Your Own Fantasy Role-Playing Epic** (though calling the latter a game in itself

might be stretching it). Now, if your title above had been The Ancient Art of War: Strategies for Combat in the Skies, it might have qualified... And we'd have missed this whole chance to discuss it!

Miner Return?

As a new subscriber and an old electronic games player I read with much interest the April '93 piece entitled "Memories of Miner." I absolutely loved this game on my old ColecoVision system. Even beat it once or twice. My question is, why doesn't someone come out with an updated version of this game for one of the newer systems? Is it too simple for the modern gaming devices?

Michael A. Schott
Hazel Park, MI

Actually, a new version of Miner 2049er was recently released, Michael. Software Toolworks made it for the Game Boy, under the Mindscape label.

Victory: the Continuing Saga

I'd like to make a correction to Edward Karp's letter in the April '93 Feedback. He states the Exidy's **Victory** (a.k.a. **Victor Banana**) was never released for the ColecoVision. In fact it was released as one of the very few CV cartridges that absolutely required the roller controller. Not a bad translation, either, though the coin-op is a lot more fun.

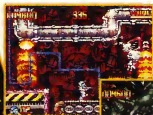
W. Jayson Hill
Knoxville, TN

All right! Now you've made all those Victory fans who missed it wish they'd looked more diligently—But maybe they didn't have the roller controller, either.

Just a reminder that while we do read and keep every letter that comes to us, we cannot respond personally. We do try to print a representative sampling, so our responses can be meaningful to as many of our good readers as possible! So, keep those letters coming, folks, to:

Feedback, c/o Electronic Games
330 South Decatur, #152
Las Vegas, NV 89107

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EG HOTLINE



IBM Starts Game Division

IBM entered the computer game business with a bang!—bang! with the release of American Laser's hot shooter **Mad Dog McCree** for PC-CD-ROM (see review elsewhere in this issue). The company created a new department for edutainment, and expects to ship 15-20 products in the first year including some curriculum software that's been upgraded for home use with more graphics, animations and

sound than found in most school products. Other forthcoming products include a picture atlas of the world being created with National Geographic.

IBM's Cal Morrell, head of the non-school marketing effort, discussed gaming philosophy with **EG**. IBM is now organized so that each business arm runs itself as a separate entity. The gaming business is under EduQuest, long a curriculum software provider to schools, now entering the consumer market for home software. The company plans to "run the spectrum

from full education to games with products in between." To demonstrate this, they deliberately chose **Mad Dog McCree** as the first release.

Cal explained that the company will act as publisher/distributor and will have the EduQuest moniker on the boxes, as well as the logos of the content providers.

Cal summarized, "When IBM steps up to the plate we're going to try to do something that sets standards in the industry instead of just following the pack."

EA Football Goes To College

Electronic Arts has signed a contract with Bill Walsh, coach of the Stanford Cardinals, to do a football game which will bear his name for the Sega Genesis. The game is based on a new engine geared to college gridiron action, with more action crowd involvement, cheerleaders, and even rowdy fans. It has 48 new plays, including new passing options (both automatic and manual), and new field perspectives for offense or defense.

NBA Plays On Coin-Op Courts

Basketball fans can now play NBA greats in two-on-two matchups with Midway's **NBA Jam**, and check

their own stats against other players as well. One to four players put stars from all 27 teams through their digitized paces including signature moves in a special window.

Controls are a joystick and three buttons—one for shooting or blocking, one for passing or stealing, and a turbo button. Midway's Autostat feature records rebounds, steals and blocks assists, and ratings on field goals, dunks and three-pointers. Players can enter initials and birthdates for personal records including wins and losses, overall standings and all-time performance.

GamesWoman Bags Award

Joyce Hakansson of Berkeley Learning Technology added the MacUser's Editor's Choice Award to her trophy collection. **Millicent's Math House**, Edmark's math skills multimedia program for children 2-6, was selected winner at the MacWorld exhibition in San Francisco. The program guides youngsters throughout a "Math House" teaching them basic calculating and mathematical skills. Programs such as this are becoming increasingly popular among educators. Children often seem to be more attentive when viewing math lessons in a computer-generated format as opposed to the old "nose-in-the-book" method and Hankanson

has capitalized on this new teaching method.

Joyce Hakansson is one of the best-known designers of children's software. A pioneer in educational software, she worked with Spinnaker Software, CBS Simon & Schuster and the Children's Television Workshop, among others, and developed hand-held learning aids with Texas Instruments. Her commitment to providing quality educational software to children of all ages and learning groups has earned her numerous accolades and awards. She has produced a plethora of educational software which continues to help in educating youngsters. Her list of award winners (too lengthy to include here) includes **Kermit's Electronic Story-Maker** (Simon & Schuster) and **Duck's Ahoy** (CBS Software).



Access Starts Tex Murphy III

Access Software gave EG an exclusive advance look at work in progress on **Under A Killing Moon**, their new Tex Murphy adventure, currently in development for

MS-DOS CD and MS-DOS computers. The CD is scheduled for release in October and the SVGA disk



The game might include a warehouse scene like this.

version for January 1994.

Access designers have completed the thumbnail sketches for the artists use in putting together this



Meticulous drawings were made of Tex's movement.

highly graphic-intensive detective story, and Access agreed to give EG's readers a look at some of these rarely shown preliminary drawings.

The highly cinematic game includes shifting camera angles that give panoramic tours of rooms,



All interior shots of the game had to be carefully drawn.

pans, closeups and other dramatic techniques. The graphics themselves are outstandingly beautiful like it will outdo even **7th Guest**, Virgin's CD extravaganza.

The story starts in California, then goes into the jungle and beyond and the way the player reacts affects the outcome



This rendering is a thumbnail sketch of San Francisco.

Memory Manager For Gamers

PC games have caught up in size to available memory on standard sys-

tems, and Quarterdeck Office Systems offers help with its Quarterdeck Expanded Memory Manager-386 (QEMM-386) originally created for use with memory-hogging office applications.

The company has a \$99.99 game package the QEMM-386 GamePAQ containing the memory manager and two games from Sierra On-Line (**Aces of the Pacific** and **Front Page Sports: Football**) plus a mail-in coupon for a free copy of Origin's **Underworld II: Labyrinth of Worlds**.



Nintendo Eyes Satellite Video

Nintendo is considering offering video games via satellite in Japan with startup in early 1994. The Japanese parent company of Nintendo of America recently acquired a stake in a satellite broadcasting firm and the two are co-developing a special adapter to let game units tap into the satellite signals. Games would be specially designed or devel-

oped for the system early suggested concepts include timed high score competitions and quiz programs, but not all the bugs have been worked out. There are no current plans for extension of the satellite operation outside Japan and at press time Nintendo of America had released no comments.

All such plans are extremely tentative however, pending total cost comparisons with a phone-based network, also under consideration.

Broderbund Signs PC Pinballers

Broderbund Software is distributing PC and Macintosh simulations of classic pinball games by Bally Williams and Gottlieb thanks to an an affiliated label agreement with Amtek Software Corp. Amtek's **Tristan** pinball game was a finalist in the SPA's 1991 Best Simulation competition, and was judged "Best Sports Game" in the MacWorld Game Hall of Fame 1992. The company recently released **Eight Ball Deluxe**, first in its Pin-



ball Classics series, based on Bally's award winner of the early '60s.

"[Broderbund's] enthusiasm for our prize-winning pinball simulations, coupled with their distribution muscle should establish

pinball as a significant and separate software category," said Peter Zurring, president of Ontario, Canada-based Amtek. "Pinball devotees can now look forward

to reliving the experience of arcade pinball at home."

Broderbund now handles sales and distribution of Amtek products in North America and Australia.

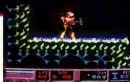
Wiz 7 Clues Available

Getting through the convoluted world of **Wizardry VII-Crusaders of the Dark Savant** may be eased somewhat with the clue

book released by Sirtech Software. Retailing at \$19.95, the 179-page guide by Brenda Garro includes maps lists of items and creatures, and discloses strategy and messages vital to pursuing the complex game

B.O.B. Delays Debut

Electronic Arts bug-eyed teen android **B.O.B.** (April '93 EG, Video Gallery), originally expected in retail stores in March, has been delayed. The latest word is that **B.O.B.** will show up in



June for play on Super NES and Genesis, and EA wanted to make shipping simultaneous for both platforms, to please all gamers.

Sesame Street Leads To EA

Sesame Street characters will star in software from EA Kids, through an agreement between Electronic Arts and Children's Television Workshop. The games will be created for play on computers, video games, CD ROM and 3DO.

Stewart Bonn, VP of the CD Group at EA, commented on the partnership: "CTW practically invented the idea of educating children through entertainment. Sesame Street is the classic example everyone would like to emulate." He went on to explain "CTW and Electronic Arts share a similar philosophy—kids learn when they're engaged and engagement stems from open-ended discovery and creative explorations.

Children's Television Workshop was founded in 1968 to use television for kids' education.

EG Readers' Popularity Poll

These games were voted as readers' favorites in EG's monthly poll. Duplicate numbers represent ties.

Favorite Video Games

1. *Street Fighter II*, Capcom
2. *Sonic 2*, Sega
3. *Streets of Rage*, Sega

Favorite Computer Games

1. *Kings Quest 6*, Sierra
2. *Street Fighter 2*, Capcom

Flashback Hotline, Tips

U.S. Gold's **Flashback**, **The Quest for Identity** (Genesis) is getting some high-powered customer support, with its own 900 Gameline (1-900-288-GAME/85 cents per minute for tips and hints, plus a 96-page strategy guide with maps and hints same phone, \$7.95) that contains exclusive comic book pages from Marvel Comics.

StarFox Sets Record

Nintendo reports that the release of **StarFox** marked the biggest single domestic shipment ever made in the U.S. of a new video game. As of the end of its introduction in March, one million copies were in the stores.

3. *Civilization*, MicroProse
3. *Dune 2*, Virgin/Westwood
3. *Pinball Fantasies*, 21st Century
4. *Wing Comm. 2*, Origin

Favorite MultiMedia Games

1. *Sherlock Holmes*, Icom
1. *Night Trap*, Sega

Favorite Coin-Op

1. *Street Fighter II Championship Ed.*, Capcom
2. *Mortal Kombat*, Williams
3. *Lethal Enforcers*, Konami

Wacky Pinball With Rocky & Bullwinkle

Beware! Boris and Natasha return in a new pinball. Data East brings the Pottsylvania spies and the heroes of Frostbite Falls into the arcades, in **The Adventures of Rocky & Bullwinkle & Friends** pinball game.

Also included in the coin-snatcher action are Dudley Do-Right, Neil and Snidely Whiplash and Mr. Peabody and Sherman.

In addition to the show's familiar main theme, sound tracks from the

original episodes complement the dot matrix display graphics. Options include drop target shots to rescue Neil from Snidely's saw table, and triple ball play



Public Invited to Summer CES

The best place to be on Sunday June 6, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. is McCormick Place in Chicago, for the Summer Consumer Electronics Show. That's the day that the show opens its doors to the public, to show off what the industry has in store for the coming year.

Dubbed "The Show of Shows," CES features all the latest in high-tech electronics, including America's largest display of video and computer games. June of 1992 marked the first time the public was admitted to the exhibition.

Compton's Offers Trade-Up Deal

Compton's New Media is offering new CDs for old when it comes to multimedia encyclopedias. Taking a leaf from competitive upgrade offers made by major application software companies, **Compton's Interactive Encyclopedia**, which retails at \$395, is available nationwide at \$149 with a trade-in of any CD-ROM encyclopedia disk or the first page of an encyclopedia user's guide.

"We anticipate a great response," said Tom McGrew, vice president of sales and marketing.

Homer Contest In Hardball III

A top home run score will win a fantasy baseball weekend for two to the induction ceremonies at Cooperstown in Accolade's **Hardball III** Home Run Derby Contest, for players of **AI Michaels Announces Hardball III**.

High scorers in the game's 20-pitch batting practice routine must send in a photograph of the screen with the entry form packed with the game. The

player with the most points gets the trip; if sluggers tie for the top score the winner will be selected in a random drawing.

Runner-up batters win complete sets of 1992 trading cards for the 25 second place winners, and Accolade baseball caps go to 100 third place winners.



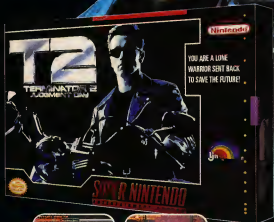
BAD TO THE BONE!



FEEL THE TERROR!



EXPLOSIVE
FIREPOWER



DESTROY CYBER-
DYNE RESEARCH



HASTA LA VISTA,
BABY!

THE FUTURE IS IN YOUR HANDS AS A LONE WARRIOR IN THE ULTIMATE METAL-WRENCHING BATTLE AGAINST THE MIMETIC POLYALLOY T-1000 TERMINATOR.

EXPERIENCE 3 TIMES THE TERROR BLASTING DEADLY FACE-HUGGERS, ACID-SPITTING ALIENS AND THE EGG-LAYING QUEEN WITH YOUR FLAME THROWER. GET READY FOR HEART POUNDING ACTION, EXPLOSIVE FIREPOWER AND AWESOME GRAPHICS AND GAME PLAY!

THEY'RE BIG, THEY'RE BAD AND THEY'RE BACK ON SUPER NES™!



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Tengen Does Sports

In an exclusive **EG** interview, CJ Welch, Tengen's product marketing manager, stressed his company's focus on sports for this summer.

Davis Cup Tennis, scheduled for release this August, simulates the life of a pro player, through training camps and competitions. The gamer can bypass these tournament trappings and just play tennis, of course. The Genesis cart offers a two-player simultaneous play option making use of a split screen.

Davis Cup Tennis features "a degree of rotation perhaps 20% to 25% one way and the other" depending on the position of the on-screen player. The game also offers options for either a three- or six-button controller.

Also scheduled for late summer release **Formula One Racing**, designed by Domark, makes use of rotating polygons, but is said to be much faster than previous racing games such as **Outrun**. CJ predicted the game will speed along "3 to 4 times faster than **SkyFox**." This cartridge also makes use of a split screen for two-player head-to-head racing.

Also on the drawing board is a 16-Meg basketball game featuring a major player license; a major shooter for Sega CD that will appear in June or July and, for the Game Gear **Tengen World Cup Soccer**.

Explaining why Tengen purchases licenses on some games and not on others, CJ discussed his philosophy: "I like a license only when it adds value to a game. I think we as an industry do not want to fall into some old habits of substituting licenses for gameplay. The operative word is FUN!"

PC to TV on a Budget

It's possible to play games in a big way by hooking a computer to a big screen TV. The manufacturer, Advanced Digital Systems Inc., says that its **VGA to TV Elite**, a PC-to-video converter that supports VGA resolution is the first such unit for under \$500.

Flashback:

The Birth of Activision

In the earliest days of programmable video games, cartridges were manufactured exclusively by the hardware companies. Designer/programmers were seldom-recognized staff men since the manufacturers feared talent looting if their names were known.

In Spring of 1979, four of Atari's most talented designers started incorporation procedures for their own company. Al Miller, Bob Whitehead, David Crane, and Larry Kaplan were joined that summer by Jim Levy, formerly in the personal computer software division of GRT, who came on board to head the new firm.

Activision opened its doors in September 1979, thus becoming the world's first third-party game soft-

"For those with small budgets, the Elite is the ideal alternative to using large overhead projectors and LCD panels," said Mike McCoy, AD president. "[It] is also ideal for users who want to record computer-generated images on VCRs."

The \$399 package includes the encoder adapter and cables, **Flick-free** software and demo disk, plus the manual.

ware firm. David Crane's **Dragster** was the first cart, followed immediately by **Boxing** by Bob Whitehead, Al Miller's **Checkers**, David's **Fishing Derby**, and Bob's **Skating**. Larry Kaplan authored the next cartridge, **Bridge**, Activision's first 4K game.

Al Miller spoke nostalgically of those days: "It was great," he said. "We were working with the best designers in the world and no one could write as much from the low-powered machines."

Atari sued but failed in its attempt to prohibit any other company from creating software for play on their hardware. Untrue rumors also circulated that use of third party software would damage the player.

EG salutes Activision. Without their defense of third party publishing, our hobby could never have enjoyed the plethora of games that have kept electronic gaming alive.

recharger allowing 7 hours play on 8 to 12 hours recharging time in the sunlight.



Sun Power to Game Boy

Take the Game Boy anywhere and play as long as desired without worrying about how the batteries will hold out, so long as the sun shows up in the morning. This is made possible by the Solar Pak, made by Naki Industries, Los Angeles. It's a solar-powered

Top Coin-Ops of April 1993

Figures courtesy of Replay Magazine, based on an earnings-opinion poll of operators.

Best Upright Videos

1. *NBA Jam*, Williams
2. *Mortal Kombat*, Williams
3. *Lethal Enforcers*, Konami
4. *Street Fighter II CE*, Capcom
5. *Terminator 2*, Midway
6. *Golden Axe II*, Sega
7. *Sunset Riders*, Konami
8. *Double Axe*, Taito
9. *Steel Gunner*, Namco
10. *Super High Impact*, Midway

Best Deluxe Videos

1. *Vertua Racing*, Sega
2. *Suzuka 8 Hours*, Namco
3. *Race Drivin'*, Pan. Atari
4. *Race Drivin'*, Atari
5. *Stadium Cross*, Sega
6. *X-Men*, Konami
7. *Final Lap 2*, Namco
8. *Exhaust Note*, Sega
9. *Arm Champs 2*, Jaleco
10. *Grand Prix Star*, Jaleco

Best Coin-Op Software

1. *Str.Ftr.II.C.E.Turbo*, Capcom
2. *Time Killers*, Strata
3. *Fatal Fury 2*, SNK
4. *3 Count Bout*, SNK
5. *World Heroes*, SNK
6. *Neck N Neck*, Bundra
7. *Street Fighter II*, Capcom
8. *Art of Fighting*, SNK
9. *Warriors of Fate*, Capcom
10. *Aero Fighters*, McO River

Best Pinball Machines

1. *Addams Family*, Midway
2. *Rocky & Bullwinkle*, Data East
3. *Creature/Lagoon*, Midway
4. *White Water*, Williams
5. *Star Wars*, Data East
6. *Dracula*, Williams
7. *Fish Tales*, Williams
8. *Terminator 2*, Williams
9. *Cue Ball Wizard*, Gottlieb/Premier
10. *Lethal Weapon 3*, Data East

BONE-CRUNCHING!



Super High Impact HIGH-IMPACT

Super High Impact for Super NES™ brings the fast-paced action of the **BONE-CRUNCHING** arcade smash home. Choose from 18 hard-charging teams and over 30 plays, from a red dog blitz to a never-say-die super fly. "Yer Toast" if the HIT-O-METER rates your tackle "Dweeb", but you can settle the score with an all-out team brawl!

Stop watching from the sidelines... This is football action so real... it's Bone Crunching!



AUTHENTIC ARCADE FOOTBALL ACTION!



OVER 30 OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE PLAYS!



SETTLE THE SCORE WITH AN ALL-OUT BRAWL!



BONE-CRUNCHING TACKLES!



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Build a Better Dungeon

The Dungeon Design Contest now underway, sponsored by Strategic Simulations, Inc. (SSI), will select the top six designs for a one-

level, one-map dungeon created with SSI's **AD&D Unlimited Adventures: Fantasy Construction Kit**.

The six finalist designs will be uploaded to America On-Line, for the network's subscribers to pick the grand prize winner and select the best in three categories: best monsters, best art and best dungeon.

The grand prize winner gets a trip for two to the '94 Gen Con Game Fair which will be held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Goofy Gets to Genesis

Disney's blundering star Goofy is on his way to the Genesis with the help of Absolute Entertainment. Most recently appearing in a paternal role on TV's *Goof Troop*, the lovable 60-year-old foul-up can be

expected in retail outlets by Christmas.

Details on the game are spotty, but the company has revealed that Goofy will stumble his way through a series of mishaps in adventures that "capture the essence of Goofy's multifaceted personality," according to Garry Kitchen, President of Absolute

Computer Games Sales Soar

Entertainment software sales reached \$342 million in 1992, an increase of over 28% compared to the previous year. According to figures supplied by the Software Publishers Association (SPA), funware grew twice as fast as the software category as a whole. MS-DOS, Windows, and Macintosh all chalked up hefty gains, offsetting the continued slide in computer software produced for all other computer platforms. Sales of DOS games and recreations hit \$267 million and Windows contributed \$30 million.

Write Your Own Screen Saver

After Dark is looking for a few new screen saver modules and Berkeley Systems, Inc. is running a contest with a \$10,000 cash Grand Prize and awards for first place winners for top Macintosh programmer and Computer Artist. One of last year's winning modules, **Guts**, which spins desktop icons and geometric shapes around the screen, leaving overlapping trails in their path, is included in the recently released **More After Dark for Windows**. The deadline is July 15.

New TTI Tip Line

Turbo Technologies, Inc. (TTI) changed its game tip line from 1-900-FUN-TG16 to 1-310-337-6916. Accord-

ing to TTI's customer support manager Stacy Preblud, "This change will make support even more accessible to our valued customers."

A time when the world seemed more fantastic and anything was possible!

Journey back in time to the year 1957 on an expedition to the dark heart of the Amazon Basin. A desperate, crazed message sends you on a perilous search through a land where legends come to life, danger hides behind every corner, and incredible treasures wait to be discovered.

AMAZON is designed in the style of the serials of the 1940's and 50's such as *Flash Gordon*, *The Lost City*, and *Rocketman*.

These serials were made up of intriguing, fast paced episodes which placed the hero in unbelievable peril. **AMAZON** contains 14 exciting episodes filled with plot twists, mysterious characters and heart stopping cliff-hangers. You haven't had this much fun since the drive-in days!



Metal monsters seek your destruction!



Top Selling Software for March, 1993

The list of top-selling computer software was compiled by PC Research of Washington, DC, based on units sold by ten retail chains, representing over 1300 stores.

TOP MS-DOS Games

1. *F-15 Strike Eagle III*, MicroProse
2. *Ultima Underworld II*, Origin
3. *Front Page Sports*, Football, Sierra
4. *Cornache*, Maximum Overkill, Nova Logic
5. *Wing Commander Origin*
6. *King's Quest VI*, Sierra
7. *Sim City*, Maxis

8. *Microsoft Flight Simulator*, Microsoft
9. *Falcon 3.0*, Spectrum Holobyte
10. *Links 386 Pro*, Access

Top CD-ROM Titles

1. *MPC Wizard*, Aris
2. *Cinermania*, Microsoft
3. *Wing Commander/Sec. Missions 1&2*, Origin
4. *Battle Chess*, Interplay
5. *Street Atlas USA*, Delorme
6. *World View*, Aris
7. *Mantis*, MicroProse
8. *Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego*, Broderbund
9. *Lost Treasures of Infocom*, Activision
10. *Adventures of Willy Beamish*, Sierra

Top Selling Video Games for February, 1993

These were the top-selling video games at Software Etc. a retailer of home PC and video game software, for Feb. 1993.

1. *Ecco the Dolphin*, Genesis, Sega
2. *John Madden Football '93*, Genesis, EA Sports
3. *PGA Tour Golf 2*, Genesis, EA Sports
4. *Road Rash 2*, Genesis, EA Sports
5. *Road Avenger CD*, Sega CD, Renovation
6. *Sonic 2*, Game Gear Sega
7. *Sonic 2*, Genesis, Sega
8. *Street Fighter II* SNES, Capcom

Transylvanian castle and a London manor. A blood red dot matrix display features scenes from the film or advancing werewolves that must be stopped and a magnetized ball floats eerily across the playfield for one of the multipaly options.

Williams insists on calling this a game one can sink one's teeth into.



Dracula Visits Arcades

Dracula will haunt pinball palaces with Williams newest, in which combina-

tion multiball plays can rack up millions and millions of points. The game's back glass and playfield includes artwork based on Francis Ford Coppola's film,

Bram Stoker's Dracula, while music and voices from the soundtrack add to the atmosphere. Playfield elements include *Dracula's* coffin, his



Battle for your life at the Bridge of Death!

Pulse pounding excitement with full motion video sequences and synchronized speech.

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Gasps in disbelief at the lost tribe of Amazon women!

*Actual Amazon VGA screens.

TAKE ON THE PROS!

R.B.I. '93 puts you into the big leagues with nearly 700 REAL Major League Baseball Players from all 28 professional rosters, including Colorado and Florida.

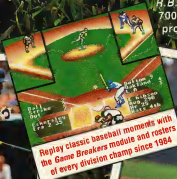
Plus you'll face them on their own turf—from Chicago's friendly confines to the Big Green Monster in Boston.

So before you pick up a baseball game for your Genesis, make sure it's not one of those bush-league efforts with phony stadiums and fake player names taken from the local phone book.

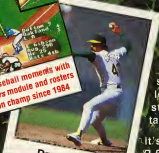
It's easy, just look for R.B.I. '93... it's the only game in town.



KIRK GIBSON



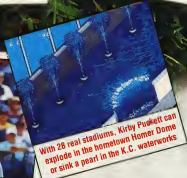
Replay classic baseball moments with the Game Breakers module and rosters of every division champ since 1984.



DENNIS ECKERSLEY



KIRBY PUCKETT



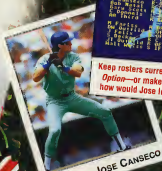
With 28 real stadiums, Kirby Puckett can explode in the hometown Homer Dome or sink a pearl in the K.C. waterworks.



BARRY BONDS



Keep rosters current with *Create Team Option*—or make your own trades... how would Jose look in Florida teal?



JOSE CANSECO

TENGEN
VIDEO GAMES

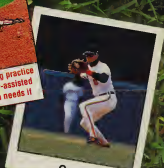
RBI '93 BASEBALL



MARK MCGWIRE



New features include fielding practice and two levels of computer-assisted defense—as if Cal Ripken needs it



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- Biggest-selling baseball series in video-game history
- Improved and upgraded gameplay features, including *Home Run Derby*, *Fielding Practice* and *Individual Player Performance Stats*.
- Full player rosters for all 28 professional teams—including new Colorado and Florida franchises
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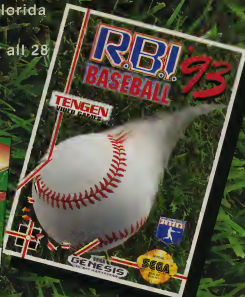
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NOLAN RYAN



You'll know how it feels to stare down the barrel of a loaded cannon when Nolan lights up the radar at 99 MPH



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MLBPA



A LOOK TO THE EAST

by Marc Camron

April 2nd and 3rd marked the annual CSG (Consumer Soft Group) show in Japan. This is the first major show of the year, and there are usually some very good games and exciting new products shown. While this year's show did have some winners, it didn't seem to pack the punch of previous shows.

First of all, I must make a public apology. I am on the record as stating that Capcom would not bring out Street Fighter 2 for the PC-Engine or the Duo. The system just doesn't seem to have enough power to handle such a game.

Well, I was wrong. One of the better games being shown was an incredible 20-Meg version of **Street Fighter 2: Champion Edition** for the PC-Engine. This will mark the largest Hu-Card game ever produced (TurboChip to you and me) and sports all of the niceties in the arcade game. The graphics are crisp and clear, and all of the bonus levels seem to be intact. There was also a six-button controller from NEC and it is expected that Capcom will produce a PC-Engine version of their special **Street Fighter Joystick**.

The most surprising thing about this game is that the game play is actually superior to the Genesis version.

Now with the **Street Fighter 2: Champion Edition** coming out for both the Genesis and the PC-Engine (no Duo release date has been mentioned) some of those who purchased the version for the SNES or Super Famicom may be feeling somewhat left out. Well you can stop fretting because after the show, and sort of quietly, Capcom announced that they would be releasing the **Street Fighter 2: Turbo Champion Edition** for the Super Famicom. While no U.S. release date has been announced, one would suspect they are keeping this quiet so the thunder that Sega is receiving for **Champion Edition** won't be lost. Since that game is being released in June, one would expect **Turbo Champion Edition** for the SNES by Christmas.

One thing that the editors were watching especially close was new games for the Mega CD. Unfortunately, this system is still dragging its feet overseas. There just weren't that many games being shown for the system, and most of what was there were complicated role-playing games.

The one bright point though, was **Silpheed**. They have obviously taken note of what Nintendo did with **Star Fox** and have refit their spectacular 3-D shooting game to have a cleaner look and feel to it. We are going to go out on a limb and call this the best game of the show. This is the type of game that could drive Sega CD sales once it is released in the United States.

Sega was also willing to talk about **Phantasy Star IV**, even though they didn't have anything to show yet. The word is that this spectacular RPG will boast some great new characters and killer graphics. The game will run at least 16-Meg and maybe

even more. Though they are hoping to finish the game sometime this year, 1994 would probably be a safer bet, particularly in the States. Still, we can hope for a pleasant surprise.

Another game conspicuously absent from the show was **Final Fantasy VI**. It may still be early for this game, but the word is that they have given up the idea of bringing out this game on CD and will be moving forward with a huge cartridge-based product. There is no word to the actual size, but indicators are pointing into the stratosphere.

With the grumblings going throughout the industry the 16-Meg barrier will most likely fall this year. The only thing standing in the way of 24-Meg or larger games, is the amount of money involved in a cart that size.



GP-1 is an exciting motorcycle racing game coming for the Super Famicom.

On the racing side of games, **GP-1** is a dynamite two-player racing simulation from Atlas for the Super Famicom. The game features a split-screen perspective and some amazingly furious action. Hopefully someone will see fit to let this one ride over the ocean to our shores.

Going from the ground to the air, fans of the classic (meaning that it was one of the first) Genesis game, **Air Diver**, can look for **Super Air Diver** coming for the Super Famicom. This is still one of the best flight simulators to come out of any console system. The game keeps its appeal, though it could be a little longer. Since Asmik has disappeared from the United States, this game has been picked up for release by Activision.



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AS SOON AS YOU FINISH, YOU'RE HUNGRY
FOR MORE.



Ahhh! Shanghai II. Millions have been amazed, intrigued, tantalized by the greatest strategy game ever devised. It's easy to get started. And even easier to get hooked.



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Shanghai II's tiles are never arranged the same way twice, so every game is a whole new challenge. And ever more difficult levels await you as your skills improve.

Now, if variety is the spice of life, Shanghai II is hot stuff indeed. For it not only gives you 13 tile layouts to try, but you can select from 11 tile designs and 6 different game modes.

Feeling competitive? Challenge the computer or an opponent to a game of Dragon's Eye where one tries to make the Dragon come to life while the other attempts to prevent it.



DRAGON'S EYE: THE
ULTIMATE CHALLENGE

Help yourself to Shanghai II. Dragon's Eye. But beware. Once you start, you'll never get enough!

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IT'S THE ONLY ROAD BEAST ON THE GLOBE THAT CAN BE CALLED "FASTEST IN THE WORLD."

SO KEEP YOUR LOTUS, FERRARI AND PORSCHE IN THE GARAGE. JAGUAR XJ220 HAS ARRIVED

"THE TRACKS ARE LADEN WITH HAIR RAISING HAIRPIN TURNS, KILLER CORKSCREWS AND STRAIGHTAWAYS SO FAST THE RED AND BLUE SAFETY TIRES SMEAR INTO PURPLE HAZE..."
-SEGA VISIONS



GRAB A BUDDY AND JOCKEY FOR THE CHECKERED FLAG AS "TEAM JAGUAR"—INCREDIBLE SPLIT-SCREEN 2-PLAYER VIRTUAL-RACING ACTION AT 200+ MPH.



BURN RUBBER ON WORLD TOUR OR GRAND PRIX CIRCUITS—32 COURSES IN ALL: SAND CHURNERS IN EGYPT, SWAMP FESTS IN THE OUTBACK, EVEN SNOW JOBS IN THE ALPS.



AFTER EACH RACE ON THE CIRCUIT, USE YOUR EARNINGS TO MEND YOUR WOUNDS—FROM BODY REPAIRS TO A FRESH SET OF TREADS TO A NEW TRANSMISSION.



CUSTOMIZE AND SAVE UP TO 16 OF YOUR VERY OWN TRACKS WITH TWISTS, TURNS, HAIRPINS, CHICANES AND BACKGROUNDS—LIKE TUNNELS, BRIDGES AND CROWDS.

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INSERT COIN HERE

Viva Las Vegas

by Jay Carter

Well, there were no Elvis sightings and any honeymooning didn't include Nicholas Cage and Sara Jessica Parker when the coin-op industry convened in Las Vegas for the spring American Coin Machine Exposition (ACME) on March 11th to 13th at the Sands Expo & Convention Center. Instead, it was an opportunity to catch the latest and greatest in amusement equipment and the leading manufacturers didn't disappoint the thousands of attendees who make their living picking out the shining stars from those that have lost their luster even before they hit the streets.

What became most apparent as the proceedings unfolded was that the entire industry remains in a state of transitional flux. It is almost as if coin-op is struggling for a solidified identity that can merge high-end developments and design directions (such as VR and disc-based entertainment) with all the attractions that borrow so heavily from a back-to-basics approach (including the growing legion of novelty/redemption equipment).

On the one hand, this dichotomy probably best defines the business since the games continue to appeal to an

extremely broad audience of players, not just in the States but around the world. However, there doesn't appear to be a consensus of ideology, as has been the case at various junctures over the years, in regard to what the near term future might mean for long range evolutionary trends.

Granted, there were an inordinate number of

Killers, but these derivatives are beginning to show their age when looking at the entire genre. But make no mistake, as long as the playing public shows its preference for these types of challenges, the category will endure as a necessary staple in much the same way driving games have become a classic standard.

And following along those lines, let's look at some of the efforts that will

be attempting to carve out a niche for themselves in the coming months. Namco has entered the fighting fray with the 2- to 4-player **Knuckle Heads** featuring six distinct characters with an international flair and each having their own unique weaponry and combination moves.

The distaff side gets ample representation with Christine Mayo wielding a dangerous wooden pole, and Claudia Silva who is more than a match thanks to her orichalcum claws. Add in the devastating double Tomahawk power of Gregory Darrell, Rob Vincent and his tongfers, Blat Vaikie and his mastery of the spiked hammer and, last but not least, Takeshi Fujioka who rounds out the combatants with scythe nunchukias.

Now, whether you might ever aspire to be the champion Knuckle Head, there are two different game modes to choose from including a Battle

Royal tourney or a much more intense Death Match Battle Royal. Your controls are an eight-way joystick and three action buttons, with one for lower attacking, another for upper offensive moves and the third for jumping, while combinations can result in a special "aura attack" that allows for more super-human feats of death and destruction.



kick/punch games to compete against the likes of **Street Fighter II**, **Mortal Kombat** (awarded best video game of the year, while **The Addams Family** took the honors as best pinball machine of the year) and even **Time**

Proving that you don't have to knuckle under to the competition, Atari, by way of developer Toaplan, has their own **Knuckle Bash**, which shouldn't make things too difficult for operators and location owners wanting to order that "Knuckle" game. Anyway, this two-player game features joystick and button controls and two different multi-level story lines.

There are three principal characters (Dice, Devo and Clash) to choose from as you attempt to bring the Mad Bull Group, a corrupt wrestling organization, to its knuckles (knees?). With head-to-head bonus rounds and interesting backdrops that introduce a broad range of villainous adversaries to contend with, **Knuckle Bash** should provide a challenging diversion for fans of kick/punch games.

Some months back we highlighted the wonders of Sega's amazing **Virtua Racing**, a sit-down extravaganza that really does put you in the driver's seat. Well, now the company is hoping to expand into locations that might not have had the floor space or the dollars necessary for the deluxe models. The result is an upright cabinet that delivers the same exciting experience complete with breathtaking polygon graphics, reactive steering wheel, accelerator and brake pedals, butterfly shifter and the option to change your viewing angle of the action on screen. In addition, **VIRTUA RACING UPRIGHT** can be linked with other uprights, side-by-side, for competitive high-speed thrills and chills.

Also coming your way is a follow-up to Taito's **Chase HQ** that was introduced a few years back. **Super Chase**, in an upright cabinet, is just that, featuring a steering wheel and simple high/low gear shift and turbo button for a limited number of "boosts" per turn. The objective is to track down criminals in a full throttle chase and bump them into submission and oblivion before heading on to your next targets.

What's interesting about **Super Chase** is that although you might find yourself traveling anywhere from the streets of Beverly Hills to Texas, New Orleans and other locales, each with their own unique obstacles and road conditions, you actually have the opportunity to put the pedal to the metal in either a sleek, high-performance sports car, a heavy-duty 18-wheeler, or an off-road vehicle that can take some serious punishment.

Now, if all this fighting and driving frenzy has you gasping for a change of pace, Midway Manufacturing may just have the ticket, or even your calling card. In fact, **HOT**

Hot Shot takes the popularity of much bigger pop-a-shot basketball games and brings it down to size for shooters of all ages. Utilizing a simple set of button controls for serving and shooting mini-basketballs, you'll discover that timing is everything as your basket moves during game play.

There are five different game modes to choose from, each featuring their own scoring potentials including 3 Point Line, 4th Quarter, Repeat-A-Shot, Around The World, and Push Back. A dot matrix display provides split-screen viewing of graphic animation sequences as well as scoring totals that are aptly enhanced by the flashing lights of the court surface, along with a full musical score and speech prompts. Additionally, **HOT SHOT** can deliver some intense head-to-head action when two

machines are linked which also expands the number of game options to allow for a contest of **Tug-O-War** or **Repeat-A-Race**.

But if you're still looking for an attraction that offers a not-so-subtle twist to basketball, Capcom's **Super Bank-It** is a ticket-dispensing challenge with a single coin launcher and a true test of dead-eye accuracy as you aim for one of seven different stationary baskets in the hope of "banking" a winning hoop.

Well, summer is rapidly at hand and the stream of new games remains unabated in the hope of keeping you away from the great outdoors. And by the look of the current crop of machines, coin-op should continue to be the best games in town.

So, until next time, keep playing and have some fun!



SHOT, which is based on the successful Milton Bradley action toy, has the ability (depending upon the location where you'll find it) to dispense tickets as a conventional redemption machine, or actually spit out collectible basketball cards based on your performance.



GAME DOCTOR

Q&As To Go

Before we get started, the folks here at **EG** have asked me to correct a misstatement which was made a few issues back. The game **Gods** was published by Konami in its computer incarnation, but the video game conversion was put out by Mindscape. Our apologies to both companies for the mistake.

Now, onto the business of providing our loyal readers with the information they seek.

Q: I recently purchased an Atari Lynx. Some of the graphic capabilities are really impressive for such a small system. The sounds, on the other hand, don't compliment the graphics at all. Is there really a 32-Bit sound chip buried in the Lynx somewhere?

**John Dietzel
Redlands, CA**

A: This was a real challenge, John. I started out by going straight to the source and contacted Atari, where I was directed to Customer Support. I was told that everyone was busy but if I would just leave my name and phone number, they'd get right back to me. A week later, since nobody had called, I tried them again and, this time, made it all the way to Customer Support—where nobody had a clue as to the system's technical specs. "The best I can do," I was told, "is try to locate someone who knows and have them call you back."

I was dumbstruck. "You mean you don't have anybody there who can even tell me how many bits there are in the sound processor?"

"Well," the service rep replied, "normally I'd send you to our Lynx Hotline, but we had to shut that down and I don't know when it'll be back up."

According to the box the Lynx comes in, the system uses a "16-Bit graphics engine" and a "32-Bit audio processor." In a previous call to Atari I was told the Lynx' CPU employs 8-Bit technology, so

the 16-Bit processor referred to may simply be a graphics processor.

For what it's worth, here are some other Lynx specs: it displays up to 16 colors simultaneously from a palette of 4,096 colors. The pixel grid is 160 x 102, runs at a speedy 16MHz and contains 64 kilobits of RAM.

Q: I have only one question to ask you. I'm 17 years old and in my last year of high school. I can draw very well and I have plenty of ideas. I want to be a designer (the people who create and animate the characters); which subjects should I take in college?

**Roberto Rodriguez
New York, NY**

A: First off, Roberto, it doesn't sound like you want to be a designer. Designers conceptualize a game, determine the play mechanics, and work out the probability formulae. They are comparable to architects, who create the plans for a house on blueprints, then turn everything over to a contractor. In the case of game design, the role of the contractor is taken by the developer, who will then often subcontract such specialties as art, music, code compression, etc., much as a contractor hires carpenters, plumbers and electricians.

From your descriptions, you want to work as a computer artist. As a designer, your artistic skills would be useful in producing storyboards, but other than a game's overall look, the designer rarely has much input to the visual presentation of the game's characters. So take all the art courses you can—most smart publishers and independent developers prefer to hire artists and then instruct them in the use of computer tools rather than taking on programmers with some drawing ability. Get a program such as the latest version of **DPaint** and start practicing with the new medium.

Q: A few years ago, I received a game system made by Coleco. This was a very

popular system. Coleco also made toys. What happened to this company, and why didn't they make new video game systems?

**Trevor Good
Alberta, Canada**

...also...

Q: Doc, you've been around for a long time and I've got to respect the knowledge you must have on the electronic gaming industry. I was going through my old issues of 80s video game magazines and it brought back a lot of memories about my disappointment with the Coleco ADAM. I never really wanted to relive those feelings, but here they are! There was so much hype and hysteria. I read through your old Q and As and you seemed to know exactly what was needed to make the ADAM fly: new and exciting games. Were the head honchos at Coleco really that dumb? They just released some really lame home helper software. If there had been some totally awesome games such as **Tunnels & Trolls**, it might just have worked.

**Mark Lohr
East China, MI**

A: Because of the subject linkage and overall focus, I decided to print these letters together. First, a mini-history of Coleco, originally the **Connecticut Leather Company**, Coleco struck it rich making those plastic backyard pools in the 50s and 60s. The company then moved into the toy business and even produced a dedicated video game system, the Coleco Arcade, in the late 70s. This system used mostly the simplified target, driving and ball-and-paddle contests and featured a built-in steering wheel and light gun as part of the console. Once companies like Atari, Magnavox, and Mattel broke ground in the programmable video game field, Coleco arrived like an 800 lb. gorilla with its hot ColecoVision, which added extra graphics and sounds. By 1982, the ColecoVision was the system of choice for heavy duty gamers, with its line of coin-op translations.



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GAME DOCTOR

It was only when the company decided to produce a computer that it began to step over the edge. Coleco was, after all, primarily a toy company, and that reality had a crippling effect on its much-hyped ADAM. In the first place, no business was prepared to use a computer produced by a toy company (they wouldn't even use Atari's). In the second place, the ADAM, when it finally appeared, looked and worked like a toy—all cheap-looking plastic and low-tech design.

As for the software which was produced for the ADAM, it wasn't only Coleco that labored under the assumption that people didn't want games for their computers—that's what they owned a ColecoVision for! Instead, companies like Coleco, Atari and Mattel believed that programs for learning French, keeping recipes and balancing the checkbook would send Americans out in droves looking to purchase a computer. Then the bitter truth set in; only Commodore sold its computer, the C64, as a home entertainment/productivity machine, and only the C64 survived.

Coleco quickly departed the consumer electronics field, but stayed around long enough to have a huge hit with its Cabbage Patch Dolls. It should also be mentioned that some of Coleco's most successful items were its tabletop versions of popular arcade games, from Pac-Man and Donkey Kong to Frogger.

As to why Coleco didn't build new systems, it was all part of the mindset of the time. Retailers saw electronic games as a fad, and when sales of 2600 software started to fade and stores were suddenly stockpiled with worthless cartridges, they declared the "fad" to be over. American manufacturers lost faith in the video game, especially after Atari's two follow-ups to the 2600—the 5200 and 7800 Flopped. It took our Japanese brothers at Nintendo and Sega to prove that electronic games are here forever.

Q: You have said that the actual cost of CDs is low but that the programmers,

designers, actors, etc. have to be paid. My question is why can't the costs be still lower? I know that music CDs have huge groups of people working on them. But their costs are still around \$15 a whack. I know that the time factor isn't the issue because both music CDs and video game CDs need years to be produced. So what's the deal? I feel Sega has a scam going and just slapped a wimpy excuse on to justify the high price.

**Matt Clarke
Myrtle Creek, OR**

A: There's no reason why a musical recording made on CD should take any longer to produce than one on audio tape or vinyl. Video game CDs, however, carry the expectation that the enhanced memory of the medium will be exploited, and the development of an original CD title can indeed take over a year—though "years" is an over-estimation. Very few companies can be profitable taking several years to produce a game—the R and D costs would be unrecoverable.

Finally, there are a lot more audio CD players out there than there are, say, Sega CDs or even MPC systems. So publishers can only hope to sell a limited number of copies. Not a real rip-off.

Q: I was wondering if the SNES Super Scope has the capability of using more than one Super Scope playing at the same time?

**Jamie Arteburn
Glasgow, KY**

A: Darn it that isn't a good question, Jamie! I had no idea and, lacking two Super Scopes with which to test the premise, I called Nintendo. Unlike Atari, Nintendo of America actually had someone who could answer this question, and did so with great detail. According to him, the problem is that the software isn't designed to handle overlapping shots. So, with two Super Scopes set on "Turbo" there's going to be intermittent firing and a loss of aiming accuracy on both weapons. If two players took turns firing, however, and didn't shoot more often than a single player could, then both guns will indeed register. However, most gamers are too quick for two guns.

Q: I recently read that Sega is currently developing a special cartridge that will contain a 32-Bit processor to upgrade the Sega CD to a 32-Bit machine. If this isn't true, is it possible for Sega's Research & Development team to develop such a cart for the Sega CD?

**William Briggs
Philadelphia, PA**

A: Sega is, understandably, mum on this subject. Especially since it is now well-known that Sega has a 32-Bit video game system in development in Japan. However, Sega insists that this system will not be coming to the United States soon, and I believe them. After all, the Genesis is selling very well at the moment and the last thing SoA would want to do is undermine its possible growth with talk about a next generation system. Remember, the Genesis was not successful in Japan, so the company has nothing to lose by trying a new system there.

As for whether or not a cartridge-based processing upgrade is possible, I'm sure it is. In fact, this would be the most sensible way for Sega to upgrade its CD drive. Of course, the real problem with the Sega CD is its lack of buffer space—something that can become a literal memory bottleneck in game-playing.

Q: What determines how many megs a game will be and can it go higher than 16 Megs?

**Jonathan Avery
Kansas City, MO**

A: Several factors go into determining how many megs a cartridge will contain. One, obviously, is the amount of memory the game is apt to require, with a special emphasis on such memory hogs as digitized graphics and sound. Another is the publisher's compression technology; on the Genesis, for example, Sega's compression/decompression capabilities are such that today's games, by and large, comprise fewer megs than those of a few years ago. Then there's the issue of cost; memory in ROM is expensive; each extra meg adds dollars to the cart's final cost. The ceiling on megs depends on the system and the state of technology.

I also want to remind readers: please, please, please do not enclose SASE for individual answers. With three columns going at the same time (here, in EGM and in CGR—check 'em out!), I get so much mail I'm lucky to be able to read it all, much less answer every question.

Some day, perhaps, when the Game Doctor Building rises high into the Nevada skies, I can hire offices full of Game Nurses to provide each and every letter with a personal answer. Until then, however, please don't make me feel guilty, okay? I don't want to have to start visiting the Game Psychiatrist again!

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FANDOM CENTRAL

Opening the Mail Bag

by Arnie Katz

Electronic gamers send me a lot of mail for one reason and the other. Oh, maybe not the pages of gaily decorated envelopes my buddy the Game Doctor hauls out of the office every day, but I get a large number, nonetheless.

Some are about this column. There aren't enough hours to answer them and do my part on **EG**, but guilt has mounted. I read all those letters, and I wish there were a way to respond to some of the points they raise. I hope this month's column will both fill this breach and answer questions for others who may have wondered about the same things, but have never written.

Most comments relate to the selection of zines for review. Some wonder why certain titles get repeated mention, and another batch complain that their fanzine wasn't covered.

The space limitations are obvious, but there's also a question of intent. This column is fandom's crucial contact point with the legions of non-fan gamers. Highlighting the best-written, most intelligent fanzines increases the chance that an **EG** reader will enjoy his or her first encounter with fandom.

First issues also get preference, especially if they are promising. New fanzines (fanzine editors) need encouragement and nurturing.

A few correspondents take me to task for being too lenient in my reviews. These opinions are nicely balanced by those who whine that I am cruel to find any imperfections in their efforts. One or two have even explained to me how very hard it is to publish a fanzine, so that I might understand why I should praise every fanzine, especially theirs, to the skies.

First, I should admit to some familiarity with fanzine publishing. I did my first one in the 1960s, and about 500 others have followed over the years. I do it because I enjoy the process of creating

such a personalized publication. If it's too much work, then consider other ways of participating in fandom, such as contributing to others' fanzines.

I strive for a positive tone when reviewing fanzines. I'm enthusiastic about fanzines, and good ones always evoke my praise. Yet it's important to inject realism into the critiques, so that prospective readers won't feel misled when they behold the actual fanzines.

I understand the pride of a faned in his zine, but that shouldn't blind them to imperfections. Otherwise, how will it improve from issue to issue?

Why aren't there any killer reviews, like in the video and computer game sections? Those are commercial products by people who want your money, and so are fair game. Fanzines are primarily vehicles for communication and personal expression, with little thought to the cash, so I gauge their quality relative to the whole electronic gaming fanzine field.

And yes, that means gradually raising the standards as the quality of zines rises.

And it is rising. Which brings me to this month's selection of new fanzines.

Digital Press Collector's Guide

Edited by Joe Santulli

44 Hunter Pl.

Pompton Lakes, NJ 07442

Semi-annual, \$5.00 per issue, 40 pages

This special publication is practically indispensable for anyone who is seriously interested in old video games, and it's a slick item for those who simply have a little nostalgia about the subject.

Among the systems covered are Atari 2600, ColecoVision, Intellivision and Atari 5200. The back of the booklet contains excellent black and white photographs of old-time game boxes.

Internal evidence indicates that this is the first of a series of twice-yearly guides. I look forward to the sequels, and I enthusiastically recommend this one. Congratulations to Joe and his staff for a fine job.

Game Force #1

Edited by Jeff Beedhan

P.O. Box 1610, Belen, NM 87002-1610
Frequent, \$1.50 per issue, 12 pages

Jeff devotes several pages in this fairly typical first issue to a listing of his 60 favorite video games across all major cartridge systems. It has some value as a checklist of important titles, but I hope he'll follow up next issue with a discussion of what he likes in games, and why these specific ones appeal to him.

A short news column, tips, a few reviews, and a short editorial round out **Game Force #1**. Jeff has made a good start, though he should drop the pseudo-pro pretensions. Jeff pleads for material for future issues, so would-be fanwriters take note.

Power Play #3

Edited by Shawn Surmick

25 Truman Ct., Boyertown, PA 19412
Frequent, \$1.00 per issue, 13 pages

This enthusiastic reviewzine concentrates on the latest cartridges, augmented by a flash of coin-op coverage. Other attractions this issue include a pleasant editorial, a list of the editor's 10 favorite games, a little news, and a few playing tips.

Although **Power Play** is still in its formative stage, the improvement since the first issue is heartening. The youthful editor knows, and loves, the games, and his comments on them make informative reading.

This is a very well reproduced fanzine, entirely legible throughout, but Shawn might want to think about tinkering with the physical appearance a bit in future issues. Better use of page space and a switch to two-sided copying would both improve the presentation.

And this is a good place to remind Shawn, as well as all other current and future fanzine editors, that a colophon is probably the single most important component of every fanzine. That little box with the editor's name and address, price per copy, and other vital



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information is the only way anyone can respond to your fanzine.

Electronics Conquest #6/7

Edited by Brian Penzone and Paco
1933 Ramblewood Ave.
Columbus, OH 43235
Frequent, \$3/6 issues, 44 pages.

Wow, what a value! This is a perfect example of my point that fanzines are published out of a desire to interact with other fans and express opinions, because the subscription price won't even cover the cost of postage and envelopes.

Paco, whom I'd like to meet under his real name if he's not just one of Brian's pseudonyms, spins a heart-tugging lament for the brain and muscle energy needed to produce a fanzine. I think the end result is worth a little sweat, and I hope Brian and Paco agree, because this is a fanzine with definite possibilities.

Two editorials kick off a potpourri of reviews, news, commentary, and other video game-oriented articles. This fanzine began life as **Target Sega**, so Genesis and the new Sega CD get a lot of ink from the editorial tandem.

SNES and Neo•Geo fans aren't neglected, though, since there's a lot of reviews and news pertaining to those platforms. Expect future issues to stress all-system coverage of the video gaming field.

One of the editors is a fair hand with software for designing headings. Eye-catching headings for each piece add excitement to the openings of the articles. The smaller ones, like the heading for the review of **Top Gear** (SNES) came out very well and could serve as a model for the zine's future graphics.

SNES Gaming #1

Edited by Rich Wigstone
770 Concord Lane, Hoffman Estates, IL 60195
Frequent, \$1.00 per issue, 7 pages

You don't have to read the colophon to know that this is a first issue. That's fortunate, because Rich forgot to include

one and instead wasted one of his precious pages on a subscription ad

This zine is impeccably produced in a utilitarian, newsletter-style format that makes reading its reviews, tips and editorializing a pleasure. I particularly like the idea of longer reviews, such as the one of **NCAA Basketball** (SNES) and **Super Mario Kart** (SNES). They are much meatier and more thought-provoking than the short squibs many other zines favor.

Super NES Gamer #8

Edited by Eric Longdin
19 Vermont St., Methuen, MA 01844
Bi-monthly, \$1.50 per issue, 30 pages

Despite the title, this fanzine covers a smattering of Sega stuff as well as its bread-and-butter SNES. I like fanzines that rove the entire hardware universe, because owners of the various platforms have a lot more in common than they have differences. It might be productive, though, if Eric stopped referring to Sega as "the enemy."

The editor picks his favorite SNES game of the year, reviews a half-dozen games in depth, an evaluation of the Sega CD, and a discussion of game company advertising campaigns.

Video Views #16

Edited by Ulrich Kempf
4732 Glenwood Circle
Emmaus, PA 18049
Quarterly, \$5.00/4 issues, 16 pages

The issue number and the excellent content testify to Ulrich's talent and experience. He's parlayed an intelligent attitude toward the games and a strong determination to constantly upgrade his fanzine into one of the hobby's leading titles. I fully expect to see **Video Views** among the nominees for the 1993 "Best Fanzine" award.

Ulrich's editorial celebrated the completion of two years of publication and heralds some changes, including the new quarterly schedule. At the risk of sounding like a broken record, I hope he'll expand this always-intriguing department in future issues and share more of his thoughts with the readers.

The lead review this time is Ulrich's dissertation on **Ecco the Dolphin** (Sega), and it's a fine examination of one of the year's most subtle cartridges. Scott Boehmer, Jeff Lin, Sean Pettibone, Todd Lintner, Francis Cone, and Matt Lotti form one of the best reviewing staffs in fandom. Several have already become well known in their own right, and they make the games section of **Video Views** on my reading list.

Other highlights include a piece about

British gaming, a review of the 1992 gaming year and Sean Pettibone's opinion column. There's also a fanzine review section

Video Game Revolution #5

Edited by Nathan Hauke
2915 E. Allerton Ave.
St. Francis, WI 53235
Frequent, \$1.50 per issue, 26 pages

This looks like a hot title on the fast track to the top echelons of fanzine publishing. Nathan blends lots of short, punchy opinion pieces with reviews and a few longer pieces to produce a most enjoyable editorial package.

The layout is just a bit plain for my taste, but Nathan has made the right decision to put his energy into bettering the subject matter and writing quality. Now that these are firmly pointed in the right directions, a little graphic experimentation seems the logical next move.

A review of the Consumer Electronics Show is the issue's leading article. It offers news about almost every major exhibitor and a few peeks at forthcoming games for the popular systems.

A big coup is the interview with Steve Harris, noted publisher of electronic gaming magazines. Steve dispels the myth that he has anything but enthusiasm for and interest in fanzines.

Nathan Hauke is one of the most promising young fans of the last year or so. **The Video Game Revolution** is already worth any gamer's attention, and it will grow. Get in on a good thing now and try a sample copy!

Neo•World #3

Edited by Nicholas
P.O. Box 40179, Long Beach, CA 90804
Frequent, \$3, 22 pages

With its color covers, poster, and flashy graphics, this Neo•Geo zine may be the most opulent fan publication so far. With all the care and planning, it's a pity they included such sketchy editorial info, not even their full names.

It contains news, previews, and reviews concerning SNK's home system. Despite a penchant for kidnap note typography, this is an admirable production, though the editors must sweat the details.

Attention Fanzine Editors!

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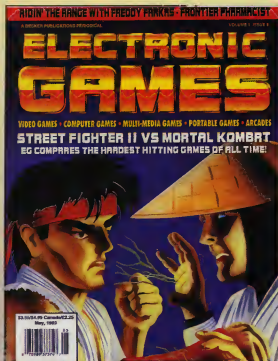
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PLAYERS' GUIDE TO BASEBALL





but obviously the company still felt the need to load up the ball on its initial 16-Bit entry with some certified star power. The result was **Ryne Sandberg Plays Super Bases Loaded**, a slightly upgraded version of the NES game **Bases Loaded 4**, with five difficulty levels, and a unique visual perspective with several cut scenes depicting special plays. The graphic presentation displays the pitcher-batter confrontation from the second baseman's point-of-view, with a radar-style overlay for tracking ball movement.

Jaleco has never let any astronaut grow under its feet in terms of maintaining a state-of-the-art position in the baseball sweepstakes, so the company is already preparing an upgraded SNES entry, **Super Bases Loaded 2** (or should that be **Bases Loaded 6?**), scheduled for release later this year.

Another veteran of the baseball wars

The visuals come in the form of a slightly elevated, behind-the-plate perspective with the obligatory side windows for tracking baserunners. When the ball is hit in the air, the camera tracks the ball and follows it along its trajectory, with an "X" appearing on the spot where the ball will land.

Special sequences include post-home run celebrations with a Diamond Vision-style scoreboard, the crowd performing a wave, and a number representing the distance the ball was hit. There are also replays of spectacular moments.

RBI '93, meanwhile, offers some intriguing new features in addition to the Major League expansion teams. Gamers can now create their own team by selecting any existing squad and replacing the players. There are also box scores, with each hitter's performance so far (e.g.: "Cal Ripken is 3 for 4") displayed as



Hardball Explodes on

by Bill Kunkel

Baseball has been berry, berry good to video games.

Even back in the Jurassic period, when T-Rex and the velociraptors took turns beating one another at **Home Run** on the Atari 2600, baseball was established as a staple of electronic gaming. The arrival of 16-Bit video game technology has brought gamers still another generation of hardball recreations, offering super realistic graphics as well as the most intelligent use yet of ratings and statistics.

Baseball games in the 16-Bit universe range from hard core realism (**Tony LaRussa Baseball**, **RBI '93**, etc.) to the wildly improbable (**Super Baseball Simulator 1.000**). There are souped-up versions of NES hits (**Super Bases Loaded**, **RBI Baseball 4**) and all new entries, generally attached to the name of a famous player or manager (**Cal Ripken Jr. Baseball**, **Roger Clemens' MVP Baseball**). But regardless of the presentation, it's becoming clear that diamond dust is replacing silicon as a primary component of the video game universe.

Up from 8-Bit!

Among the first baseball contests to arrive on the 16-Bit scene were upgraded conversions of established 8-Bit hits. Jaleco had already produced four successful installments of **Bases Loaded** on the NES by the time the SNES debuted,

is Tengen, whose **RBI Baseball** series has long been a dominant force in the NES market. In the 16-Bit marketplace, however, Tengen has concentrated its efforts on the Genesis, turning out its well-produced 8-Meg **RBI Baseball 4** and a more recent, upgraded version, **RBI Baseball '93**.



RBI 4 continues Tengen's traditional treatment of video game baseball.

Both games offer real players, all the Major League pro teams, a Home Run Derby option and plenty of special camera angles. **RBI 4** features complete stats from the '91 season while **RBI '93** contains the '92 numbers. In fact, the statistical underpinning on these games is about as good as it gets in the video game world, and gamers who enjoy using real big league players will find these two titles hard to beat.

they step up to the plate. There's even the option of taking defensive practice — a nice adjunct to the Home Run Derby feature that allows gamers to sharpen their glove work. A "computer assist" mode is now available to help novice players, gamers can choose to be the home team or the visitors, and all the music has been rewritten, along with the option of turning off the tunes altogether and simply grooving to the sound effects.

A baseball game that established its solid rep in the computer leagues has now arrived as a major presence in the video game circuit. The only game with an announcer as a front man, **AI**





Al Michaels lends his famous voice to Accolade's lineups in *HardBall III*.

Michaels Announces *HardBall III* (Accolade/Genesis) is a superb simulation with tight graphics, extensive speech, and a good statistical foundation. ***HardBall III*** doesn't use real teams or players, but it is loaded up with some of the nicest bells and whistles in any baseball

infield, five outfield) and 26 different stadiums. Players can choose to just manage or play the field, buy and sell teams, and even modify team colors. While it may not have real players, ***HardBall III*** is still an amazing job of baseball simulation.

Finally, Namco brings ***Batter Up*** to 16-Bit snuff with ***Super Batter Up*** for the SNES. It offers an elevated, behind-the-batter viewpoint, realistic graphics, plenty of onscreen data and flanking windows featuring close-ups of baserunners.

The Name Game

The 16-Bit baseball games that don't have an 8-Bit pedigree have felt obligated to sign on a big name from the sport to help sell their software. Ryne Sandberg, Nolan Ryan, Earl Weaver, Tommy Lasorda, Tony LaRussa, Roger Clemens, and Cal Ripken Jr. among others have all

Sculptured Software did on the two 16-Bit versions of his game, ***Roger Clemens' MVP Baseball***. Both the SNES (LJN) and the 8-Meg Genesis (Flying Edge) versions feature large, realistic-looking players and a totally unique visual style. The camera starts out behind the plate at a slightly elevated angle. Then, once the ball is hit, it moves to a position directly behind the fielder. It takes a while to get used to the shifting perspective (one moment the player is facing the outfield and the next instant they're staring toward the backstop), but once mastered, ***MVP Baseball*** has a lot to offer.

Among its features, however, real teams and players are not included. There are two divisions (the American and the National, coincidentally enough) with 14 teams in the American and 12 in the National. The games feature exhibi-

the Video Game Scene



video game.

The pitcher-batter scenes are rendered in a behind-the-plate display, with the field widening once the ball has been put into play, with a spotlight appearing beneath the fielder under the gamer's control. The interface uses an interesting series of menu options before each pitch. The batter decides whether to bunt, make contact or swing with power. With runners on base, the gamer can opt to steal, hit and run or call for a squeeze play. On defense, meanwhile, the player selects the appropriate pitch from each hurler's customized repertoire. From this point on, the game plays in traditional video game style, with any play able to

be reviewed through the instant replay option.

Special features include an onscreen baseball card display for the pitcher and batter before each at-bat, a box score, batting practice, and extensive team editing, especially in League Play mode. Player-managers can edit the lineup, select from among 11 different fielding alignments (six

contributed their names, likenesses and, in some rare cases, their expertise to electronic baseball games. The vast majority of these games make little or no use of their spokesmen in game terms, and at least one company has lived to regret its association—Activision/GameStar had just released ***Pete Rose Baseball*** when the King of contact hitting got busted for gambling and was thrown out of baseball.

Romstar, for example, decided it needed some star power in order to sell a SNES conversion of the SNK Neo•Geo game, ***Baseball Stars Professional***, so it became ***Nolan Ryan Baseball***. Although Romstar opted for a more realistic, sophisticated look when it published ***Baseball Stars II*** on the NES, ***Nolan Ryan Baseball*** returns to the Neo•Geo look, complete with big-head players and cartoonish animation. The game offers some interesting features along with a traditional, behind-the-plate perspective, but the visuals nearly sabotage the designers' best efforts.

The aging power pitcher from Texas also makes an appearance on the Genesis in a more impressive looking game: ***Nolan Ryan Express*** from Mentrix Software. This game boasts a ground level, behind-the-plate perspective that reproduces the speed of a fireballing hurler with frightening realism.

"The Rocket" Roger Clemens, meanwhile, can be justly proud of the job

tion or league play, with passwords to pick up seasons-in-progress. There are also replays and an onscreen scoreboard. And, wouldn't you know, Roger Clemens makes periodic appearances to share strategy tips.



Many stars of the diamond, such as the O's Cal Ripken Jr., help sell the titles.

Even more impressive among the many name-game baseball entries are the SNES and Genesis versions of ***Cal Ripken Jr. Baseball*** from Mindscape. Once again, the teams and players are not from the real world, but the graphics are among the most realistic ever seen.

The game uses an elevated, behind-the-plate viewpoint for pitcher-batter showdowns, with side windows for tracking baserunners. Once the ball is hit, the camera moves back and out, taking in the entire field with the help of some left or





bar **LaRussa** is most similar to **HardBall III** but offers real teams and real players. It also features three play modes (player, manager and spectator), a draft team option, and it can save a season's worth of individual and team stats via its battery backup. This 8-Meg game doesn't quite measure up to **RBI '93** in terms of its statistical muscle, but it does feature the best blend of state-of-the-art sound and graphics and solid stats of any video game entry.

And then there are games that never seem to get old. **Tommy Lasorda Baseball** (Sega/Genesis) doesn't have real teams or players, its stat base is all but useless, and Tommy doesn't even turn up to pitch Nutra-System. It's also one of the first games ever released for the Genesis. But when it comes to the fun factor, **Lasorda** still kicks the butts of most of its progeny. Why? Because it's fun, a factor whose explanation is elusive and impossible to quantify. But you can't ignore the fact that, years after its release, this game is still a blast. Even Sega's own **Sports Talk Baseball** for the Genesis, once you get past its speech gimmick, is a drag bunt in comparison.

right scrolling. Ball movement is tracked through an on-the-field shadow as an extremely gruff-voiced announcer (who sounds like he just let fly with a glob of Red Man residue) relates the result of each play. There are close-ups for close plays and a choice of three generic stadiums: Maxwell Dome (an indoor, astroturf park), Patrick Field (a smaller, more traditional grass ballfield) and Stevens Park (a modern, outdoor stadium with high, intimidating walls).



Sega's **Sportstalk Baseball** carried the ballgame's commentary to new heights.

Both 16-Bit **Ripken** games feature exhibition games, league play and a Home Run Derby option. And while Cal is the only actual Major Leaguer in the game, he can be used as a pinch hitter for either team, in a rather unusual bit of game design whimsy.

Perhaps the most impressive of the new generation of baseball video games, however, is the one that had the most input from the man on the box. **Tony LaRussa Baseball** (EA Sports/Genesis) is a streamlined version of the computer game profiled in the accompanying side-



Swings to Come

Predicting things to come is a dicey business at best, but one thing about the future of video games is certain: we haven't seen the last of the 16-Bit baseball sweep.



As with all games, making dumb errors can't cost the player in the long run.

Hudson Soft will be bringing out **Power League Baseball** for the SNES later this year, and Sony/Imagsoft has one of the potentially hottest licenses around in **ESPN Baseball**. Versions of **ESPN Baseball** for both the Sega CD and Genesis are scheduled to slide home later this fall.

Baseball has long been associated with certain things: hot dogs; peanuts; a sunny, summer day; big money contracts; balls, strikes and lockouts. And now we can add yet another item to that list: video games.

Baseball from Mars

Our discussion of 16-Bit baseball wouldn't be complete, however, without mentioning the SNES version of **Super Baseball Simulator 1.000** from Culture Brain USA. This upgraded version of a mondo bizarre NES game takes the National Pastime into the Twilight Zone. Pitchers launch fireballs from bionic arms; baserunners levitate as they round the diamond and outfielders leap nearly into orbit in order to take down fly balls.

The visual presentation, oddly enough, is rather traditional, with an elevated behind-the-plate point-of-view and the usual windows for baserunner close-ups. However, tradition ends here. The calm atmosphere of a sunny Sunday afternoon game is lost in the future. So, if you ever felt that baseball would be improved by letting Marvel Comics rewrite the rules, this is definitely the game for you.

by Bill Kunkel

In a world where a famous name is all but obligatory in order to distinguish one baseball simulation from another we've seen Roger Clemens, Cal Ripken Jr., Tommy Lasorda, Earl Weaver, Nolan Ryan and heaven only knows how many other star names attach their reputations to a variety of electronic hardball games. In most cases, however, aside from appearing on the box cover, the superstars have virtually no input into the games themselves. At most, a bit-mapped or digitized picture of the player or manager periodically appears on-screen in order to lay a generic strategy tip on the gamer.

But when Tony LaRussa signed with SSI to represent a major computer simulation being developed by Don Daglow's Stormfront Software (formerly Beyond Software), he made it clear that he was

son in only eight minutes on a 486-50 PC), a 40-player roster (25 players during the bulk of the season with the Active Roster expanding by 15 players after September 1, just as in real baseball) and All-intensive manager profiles. The trading policy was also made less restrictive (pitchers can now be traded for non-hurlers, for example) and 28 different stadiums are available, including 11 all-time classics and a pair of generic ballparks, all reproduced in amazing detail.

Surprisingly enough, despite having developed something of a reputation as a "computer age manager," LaRussa does not make extensive use of computers in establishing lineups or dictating strategy. "I don't really use computers very much," he admitted, adding that after his involvement in this series of simulations, however, his interest in the machines has definitely been piqued.

bar gauges, gamers map tendencies and preferences in order to create a managerial personality.

LaRussa, for example, is not a "big inning" manager. "I try to score the first run. An overwhelming percentage of times, the team that scores first, wins." Other managers, such as Earl Weaver when he managed the Orioles, held an almost religious belief in the power of the three-run homer, or "Dr. Longball" as he called it.

Users create their Manager Profiles by moving the sliders toward either end of two philosophical extremes. One area, for example, contrasts Value Speed vs. Value Power, ie, will the computer manager want a bunch of small, speedy players who take the extra base and steal frequently, or a team full of big bombers who knock the cover off the ball and can take their time rounding the bases? The



Tony LaRussa Plays Baseball Designer

in it for the long haul. "He was absolutely incredible," enthused Daglow. "He was always available to us and he worked on this project every inch of the way. Tony is a baseball fan, and he's willing to talk baseball for hours and hours. There's been times when we were afraid we were intruding on his 'real' work, but he'd tell us to sit down and take our time. He was fabulous."

The original game, **Tony LaRussa's Ultimate Baseball** (SSI/MS-DOS), proved so successful that a second edition was soon commissioned, along with an action-strategy video game version, called simply **Tony LaRussa Baseball** (EA Sports/Genesis). The new computer game eliminates the tree-style menus of the original in favor of a more intuitive, user-friendly interface. Other additions included the ability to run an entire sea-



Smooth animation in the replay mode really brings Ultimate Baseball to life

"What generally happens is I get one sheet of paper a day and it has all the important numbers on it. But after working on these games, I've been awfully impressed by the capabilities of these computers."

He was also surprised by the baseball acumen possessed by the crew at Stormfront. "Don [Daglow] and the people at Stormfront impressed me tremendously. They really know baseball and it was a pleasure working with them."

And work with them he did. Daglow acknowledged that LaRussa's most significant contribution was probably his help in developing the Manager Profile, a major new feature in **LaRussa II**. The Manager Profile allows the user to customize the computerized skipper so that "he" has his own unique style and strategy. Using a series of sliding levers and

beauty of this system is that the user doesn't have to go all the way in favor of either philosophy, positioning the slider in the middle, for example, will produce a manager who likes a balance between the two types of play.

Other areas include: Value Defense vs. Value Hitters (will he mind having a shortstop with no range who can hit 30 dingers in 500 at bats or would he prefer a top glove man with mediocre offensive skills?); Value Endurance vs. Value ERA (would he rather have starters who can shut down batters for four-to-six innings then run out of gas, or finishers who give up a few runs?); Sacrifice vs. Hit Away; Hit and Run vs. Play it Safe, and ten other profile areas. The Manager Profile covers Lineup and Rotation, Pitching, Batting, Defense, and Base Running strategies.

The result is a game that not only looks like baseball, it *plays* like baseball. One of the major reasons for the authenticity is the fellow on the cover. Unlike other players and managers who've taken the money and run, LaRussa made a genuine commitment to this project, following along closely with the game designers, programmers and artists to ensure that the end product would measure up to his exacting standards. Considering the success of his teams, the game should do quite well.

Or, as he himself put it: "I'm proud to have my name on this game."



Tony's coaching expertise is put to good use in his newest baseball game.



for the full spectrum of CD-based platforms. **Bush League Baseball** (Doc's) may debut before the end of the current season, while **MicroLeague Baseball CD** (MLSA) is aiming for Opening Day 1994.

They aren't for everyone. These games get complicated. Chip technology has greatly streamlined play-procedures, but piloting a ballclub is more mentally demanding than the typical side-scrolling shooter. Knowledgeable students of the National Pastime are willing to make the extra effort, because there's no more entertaining way to get inside the sport.

Stat baseball is a unique gaming experience. For the many gamers who are discovering this type of contest, this article provides a general guide and introduction to the category.

Every exploration begins with questions. Two logical ones are: What is a statistical simulation? How do such



Some statistical titles allow the players to choose famous lineups from history.

processes current-season performance into wins and losses for each fantasy baseball team. Statistical simulations require the gamer to make decisions for everything that happens from first pitch to last, just like Tommy Lasorda and Cito Gaston.

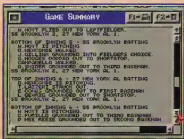


Statball! Build Your

by Arnie Katz

Statistical baseball simulations have been feeding the dreams of grandstand managers for over 50 years. Managing the major leaguers is almost a hobby in itself, the favorite gaming of several hundred thousand people.

Until recently, only compu-gamers could enjoy electronic stat simulations. Baseball video gamers were strictly arcade-style contests. Stat-influenced baseball, pioneered by the legendary Scott Orr (**Star League Baseball**), has brought simulation concepts into the cartridge world.



The MicroLeague Baseball line has always provided credible stat games.

The product explosion just getting started in multimedia is sure to include baseball games. At least two stat-oriented games are currently in development

games differ from other types of baseball games?

Action baseball carts and disks put the gamer into a player's uniform. You snap the split-finger fastball over the outside corner, slap the ball into right behind the runner, and stretch a single into a two-bagger.

Some action games feature the names of real players and use some statistics to influence the real-time interaction. In the final analysis, though, the gamer still bats, pitches, fields, and runs.

Tony LaRussa Baseball (Electronic Arts/Genesis) and **RBI Baseball 3** (Tengen/SNES) are part of a new generation of baseball cartridges that blurs traditional distinctions. They are fundamentally action games, but voluminous statistics help shape every real-time interaction. (Find out more about both games in *Bill Kunkel's article elsewhere in this section*.)

Purists don't want any action element to intrude on the simulation. For them, the 100% tactical simulation is the only choice.

Statistical baseball simulations give fans a chance to see how they'd do as coaches, managers, and even general managers. Stat simulations differ from the rotisserie and fantasy baseball leagues in one important way: fantasy baseball is abstract, while stat simulations strive for detailed realism. The rotisserie-style games use a formula that

A League of Their Own

Isolated games and series are fun, but leagues are the pinnacle. Members get to be general manager as well as on-field skipper. It puts the whole simulation in a fresh perspective. You've got to pick a team that can win now and remain competitive for years to come. Winning a league pennant is a feat, but carving a dynasty that keeps winning is a notable gaming achievement.

Finding enough managers is easier than it looks. All you need is four managers, though six or eight would be better.

League members don't have to be experienced electronic gamers, either. The command systems are easy. The Royal Amateur Micro Baseball Organization (RAMBO), which flourished for five seasons in New York, had managers who'd never touched a computer.

If you know a couple of hardball zealots, chances are that they each know one or two more. Otherwise, the local card stores and game shops, BBSs, and company-sponsored newsletters are other likely recruiting centers. Schedule a league get-together every week or so to build a group feeling and provide an opportunity for those exotic multi-team trades.

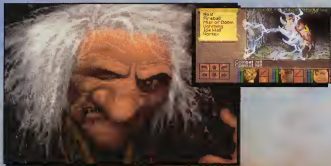
LANDS OF LORE

THE THRONE OF CHAOS



The Dark Army encroaches.
King Richard falls. And Scotia
beckons you, laughing...

In her mad quest for power, Scotia has ravaged the
kingdom. She seeks the throne, yet it eludes her.
She's getting desperate. She's getting mean.



CAN YOU STOP HER? DO YOU DARE?

FEATURING

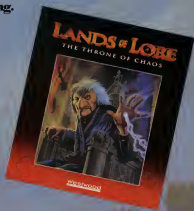
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MEET JORDAN MECHNER, THE REAL PRINCE OF PERSIA

by Russ Ceccola

Jordan Mechner (pronounced "meck' ner") is a name that people might not recognize, but his design work has been seen the world over in **Karateka** and, more recently, the enormously popular **Prince of Persia**. **Prince of Persia** has had two life-cycles—first in the computer game genre and now in the video game market.

Mechner was hard at work putting the finishing touches on its sequel, **Prince of Persia II: The Shadow and the Flame**, when he sat down for a quick **EG** interview. The young game designer possesses the imagination and resourcefulness of the best artisans in the field, but only two commercial releases under his belt prove it. **Prince of Persia II** marks his return to electronic games and commitment to apply his talent to future products.

Mechner got his start in gaming back in high school when he obtained one of the original Apple II's at age 16. He was fascinated by the power of the machine and worked on games in his spare time in BASIC and Assembly. Later, while in college in 1984, Mechner managed to commercially release **Karateka** through Broderbund, initially for the Apple II.

"I wanted to turn a computer game into a story. People who were playing it would have the feeling of being a character in the drama. **Prince of Persia** is closer to that goal," he remarks. **Karateka** was "one of the earliest fighting games. It was not a story-driven game. It was a result of Atari's late '80s



Streets of Rage. Street Fighter and Double Dragon games.

Prince of Persia was the next logical step in Mechner's design evolution. It combined the story elements that he had always wanted in a game with cinematic effects and lifelike movements. **Prince of Persia** debuted on the Apple II and later shifted to the IBM and Amiga computers. This unique game enjoyed moderate success in the computer market. Everyone who played the game liked it, but the separation in time of the different versions may have killed its momentum.

Just the opposite occurred a year ago when the video game conversions of **Prince** started to appear on store shelves. More people played the game and fell in love with the clever animation.

Mechner contended that the game could have been designed technologically as early as 1982, but that "it's almost like there's a technology of software as well as a technology of hardware. A machine comes out, developers do something for it and then someone else does another little trick to develop the vocabulary of the software."

Mechner took some time off from game design and attended film school in New York City before he started **Prince II**. Now he devotes about half his time to his film efforts and the rest to game design—an interesting balance.

Prince is one of a handful of games that's available for almost every video game system, as well as some computers. Although the video games originated in foreign countries, Mechner was able to keep an eye on their development. Sega's Sega CD conversion and Konami's Super NES **Prince** are the nicest of the bunch in the graphics and sound departments, but all the versions duplicate the unique game play that makes the title so special.

Konami went an extra step and both changed the existing levels and added new ones. Mechner approved preliminary sketches of the changes. He feels that "it's a thrill to see all the different versions of **Prince of Persia** on machines that I don't even own when I did the

original Apple II version. I'm happy to see that they're taking advantage of the machines for which they're designed. I like what Konami did with the Super Nintendo version because they changed the level maps and added on levels; the game is different enough that even I can't beat it yet!"

Prince's game play has roots in Mechner's unusual approach to its production. He used his younger brother (age 16 at the time) as a model for the main character's movements. He dressed him up in baggy white pants and a T-shirt with the arms cut off and took him out to the *Reader's Digest* parking lot, near where they lived, for filming. Mechner recorded his brother's actions in order to later break down the video into frames of animation he could import into the game. Mechner's sibling hung from ledges, ran back and forth and jumped as far as he could, all captured on Jordan's movie camera.

Mechner then set up a tripod and camera next to his TV and VCR and took snapshots of each frame of his brother's movements. He took the prints of the single frames and colored the background solid black and his brother white so that he could use the outline. The final step was to put the modified prints on an art stand and record each frame into a video camera and scan the results straight into the Apple II's only available graphics card at the time. If he had to film the same action today, Mechner is convinced he would use an all-video approach, but his past efforts served him well because **Prince II** uses the same frames of animation as **Prince**. **Prince** really turned out to be a family job; in addition to his brother, Jordan's father supplied the music for the Apple II and IBM versions.

The success of the **Prince** game versions is very satisfying to Mechner. Until there is an audience response, developers can never be sure that their game is successful. Mechner addressed this problem from the start: "My original idea was to have an animated character that was so completely controlled that you

felt that you and the joystick were one." Anyone familiar with **Prince of Persia** knows that this technique worked.

Prince of Persia II builds upon the same game play as its predecessor, but layers on multiple paths, more cinematic sequences, and more environments. The goal is to guide the prince back to Persia to defeat the imposter put in his place. Most of the animation came from the first game, with the exceptions of a new "crawl" move, fight sequences with two guards at once and a brand new weapon, used later in the game.

Unlike his efforts on **Prince of Persia**, Mechner worked with a Broderbund design team to produce **Prince II**. Mechner commented that "designing **Prince of Persia II** felt like directing a film." He had to focus on the creative end of things and leave the graphics, sound effects, music and programming up to the members of his team.

The team approach helped him correct some problems he had in the past: "I enjoy working on the same project for a long time rather than doing it quickly to get it done. It's always a personal battle between making it perfect and getting it done somewhere close to what people expect."

Prince II is the next step in the development of Mechner's dreams into entertaining games. Next up on the agenda is "a storytelling game" that he promises will be unlike other adventure games.

In the meantime, Mechner also has his film interests to watch over. Over the summer, in Cuba, he filmed an 18-minute documentary called "Waiting for Dark" and hopes to release it to art film houses soon.

Mechner's film experience gives him an edge over most of the other designers making multimedia titles. "Now is the first time that the technology that's out there can be used to create new things that are just as interesting and involving as films, and in some ways more so. We can do things that are neither computer games nor films, but are quite worthwhile in their own right." His future projects should prove this to be true.



Jordan Mechner's vast expertise in film and video helped to make **Prince of Persia II** a truly unique title.

GAMESOUNDS

MAKING YOUR VIDEO GAMES SCREAM!

by Bill Kunkel

Video game audio has come a long way baby from the era of beeps and boops. In the past 24 months however sound has taken a quantum leap forward. Compare the nursery rhyme-like cadences of the Mario games for example with the orchestral power of **Super Star Wars**, the hip-hop of **ToeJam & Earl** or the hard-edged QSound rock of **Terminator CD**. In Japan, video game composers have devoted followings—a boxed set of CD music from the **Street Fighter** games was recently released there to tremendous fanfare and public interest—while the audio department heads at game publishing companies here in the States frequently receive resumes from award-winning TV and film composers along with entries from veteran computer musicians.

Sound is the happening area in today's electronic games. The shift in emphasis began several years ago with the appearance of quality sound boards for computers and the success of the MIDI format, but today's most advanced audio development is going down

in the video game arena, where all the 16-Bit systems place a premium on quality sound. And the sounds heard most often have a hard rock edge to them.

"The kids who are playing these games are [largely] between the ages of eight and 24," says Tommy Tallarico of Virgin Games. "And I'm thinking to myself: what kind of music do these kids want to hear? They want rock and roll they want dance music, rave whatever. So that's what I'm giving them. And it's also the kind of music

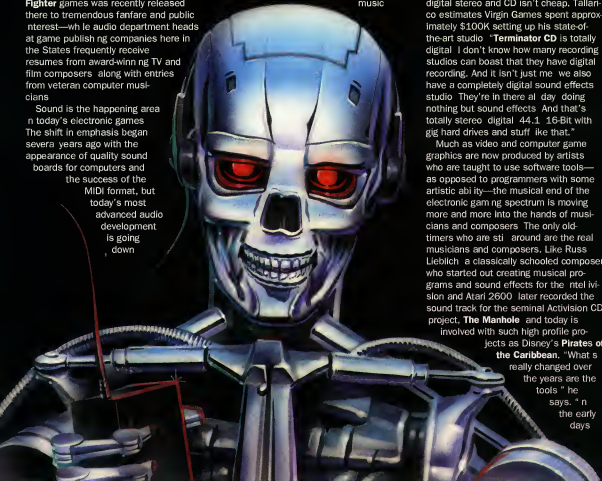
like since I'm also in that age group."

Rock does seem the perfect musical metaphor for hard-core twitch contests. "In games like **Terminator CD** and **Global Gladiator** and [many of] the other games we've done, audio is just blasting you from the minute you turn it on," says Tallarico. "I want the player to be psyched, I want them to want to get to the next level just to hear the next tune."

Of course, not every game should be played to rock and roll accompaniment, and Tommy makes the point that as wide a variety of popular music forms as possible should be explored. "The first time I picked up **Hook CD** for the Sega," he recalls, "I was playing the game and you hear all this great, orchestral sound track-type music. And at first I thought it was kind of weird that it didn't fit. But after playing the game for five minutes or so, I thought, this is the way it should be. It just wasn't used to hearing that type of big production music, so it seemed a little overblown. But once you get into it, you think, hey, you could get used to this!"

Producing quality sound in the era of digital stereo and CD isn't cheap. Tallarico estimates Virgin Games spent approximately \$100K setting up his state-of-the-art studio. "Terminator CD is totally digital. I don't know how many recording studios can boast that they have digital recording. And it isn't just me, we also have a completely digital sound effects studio. They're in there all day doing nothing but sound effects. And that's totally stereo digital 44.1 16-bit with gig hard drives and stuff like that."

Much as video and computer game graphics are now produced by artists who are taught to use software tools—as opposed to programmers with some artistic ability—the musical end of the electronic gaming spectrum is moving more and more into the hands of musicians and composers. The only old-timers who are still around are the real musicians and composers. Like Russ Lieblich, a classically schooled composer who started out creating musical programs and sound effects for the Intel Division and Atari 2600, later recorded the sound track for the seminal Activision CD project, **The Manhole**, and today is involved with such high-profile projects as Disney's **Pirates of the Caribbean**. "What's really changed over the years are the tools," he says. "In the early days



you had to be able to program. Today you can go out and hire any major pop star or film composer and digitize their music."

Or, as Tommy Tallarico puts it, "I think there are going to be a lot of computer musicians out of work a year from now. Most of the people know in the industry



Even the *Little Mermaid* has benefited from modern sound programming.

call themselves musicians but they really sit around all day clicking a mouse or entering music through a computer keyboard rather than a musical keyboard. Meanwhile, I'm getting demo tapes from people who are Emmy Award winners, professionals in the movie, commercial, and record industry who feel this is the field that they want to get into. They see it as being the Next Big Thing in entertainment: multimedia! And they want to get in on it now."

Mark Steven Miller, president of Nu-

The Best Games We've Ever Heard

Having spent all this time and space discussing audio in video games, it's only appropriate that some examples of this new state-of-the-art sound be provided. Here then, in alphabetical order, are five of today's best scored game experiences:

Global Gladiators (Virgin/Genesis) Tommy Tallarico burst upon the video game music scene with this wildly creative sound track assault on the senses. Although GG uses a theoretical tie-in with McDonald's, the music doesn't play kiddie games—it goes straight for the throat!

Sonic the Hedgehog (Sega/Genesis) It's only fitting that the fastest program in home gaming history should have a manic, kinetic—and heavily hook-infested—sound track. That's what **Sonic** delivers. Some of the tunes on both the original work and

Romantic Productions, a major supplier of audio for the electronic gaming industry, agrees that the new technology has taken the emphasis away from the "computer" in "computer musician."

"In the older machines, when you had three square waves and a noise channel the most that you could do was to convey a simple melody, with a simple harmony, and a very basic rhythm track. So it probably didn't make sense to try and write pop music in a format like that.

"Today we have the Genesis and the Super Nintendo, which use pretty sophisticated, if somewhat arcane, sound synthesis technology. The Genesis chip is very similar in architecture to Yamaha keyboards that were current no more than ten years ago. And the Super Nintendo is very similar to the first popular sampling keyboards. Suddenly you're getting synthesis capability and processor power to run drivers that are similar to what popular music was being written with ten to fifteen years ago. And a lot of that technology, while the audio frequency band width and the capabilities have increased quite dramatically, is still technology that's used in popular music. So you can write music that captures a lot of the essential sonic imagery and components of modern music."

Another area of video game sound that is being explored very heavily by today's software developers is the "toon idiom." The success of "Who Framed Roger Rabbit" and Spielberg's revival of the old Warner Bros. characters in "Tiny Toon

the sequel will continue spinning around inside the listener's head for weeks.

Streets of Rage (Sega/Genesis) Yuzo Koshiro is just about universally acknowledged as the most gifted composer currently working in the video game field, and the music for both **Streets of Rage** games (**Bare Knuckles** in Japan) demonstrates his skill to ideal effect. "I remain extremely impressed with both **Streets of Rage 1** and **2**," commented Mark Steven Miller, "from a purely technical point of view. In terms of production values and thoughtfulness of all the fine and finer details [involved in] making the Genesis sound phenomenal, he really tears that machine apart."

Koshiro also produced the sound tracks for **Ys**, **Actraiser**, **Final Fantasy** and **Street Fighter II**, probably his best known work.

Super Star Wars (Lucasfilm-JVC/SNES) A masterpiece of orches-



Taz-Mania features incredible game sounds, many taken from the cartoon.

Adventures" has led to several big time cartoon-based video game projects, several of which have involved Nu-Romantic on the audio end.

"One of the things we're working on now," Miller reveals, "which I think is shaping up to be a fantastic product, is **Daffy Duck: the Marvin Missions**." Based on the classic Warner characters of Daffy and Marvin the Martian, the game is being developed for the Super NES by Icom Simulations and will be published by Sunsoft. "We've done a number of Warner Bros. projects in the past. We did **Taz-Mania** for the Genesis, which was the game that got us started working with the Warner Bros. style. And that led us to **Road Runner** on the Super NES, which was also for Icom and Sunsoft, and now to **Daffy Duck**. And we did **The Little Mermaid** on the Genesis, so we've also done some Disney cartoon stuff.

tral translation by Sculptured Software's Paul Webb brings all the cinematic power of the original John Williams' score to this video game classic. "The Super Nintendo is a real challenge for sound," conceded Mark Steven Miller, "and especially for orchestral sound. Hats off to Paul Webb at Sculptured."

Toejam & Earl (Sega/Genesis) After spending weeks trying to come up with musical themes, and despairing that he would ever manage to stumble upon one of the musical ideas co-designer Greg Johnson already had hip-hopping inside his brain, Nu-Romantic honcho Mark Miller finally handed Greg a tape recorder and told him to go off somewhere and vocalize the melodies into the machine. Mark worked with the result and produced one of the watershed soundtracks in video game history. **Toejam & Earl** busts loose with funky hip-hop rhythms.

-BK

"The idea of taking cartoon music and sound design and turning that into an interactive musical environment is really the thing that I find most interesting. The gestalt effect of cartoon music is sort of controlled mayhem. There's this real tight scoring in cartoons since the timing of the music and the timing of the action are locked so tightly together. When you



Tallarico also displayed his musical genius in the *Global Gladiators* game.

have that degree of synchronization between what the animation is doing and what the music is doing, you can produce some crazy stuff. You can do some real gymnastics because as long as the visuals go in sync, the brain becomes

much more flexible in terms of what it's willing to understand.

"I think *Taz-Mania* is a great example of that. Ninety percent of the sound effects are musical gestures and much of the background music is constantly changing, depending on what Taz does. If you turn off the screen and just listen to the music, it's chaos. It's way out there. There's one tonality in the music and another in the sound effect. But the fact that the sound effects are so tightly locked frame-by-frame with the animation, while the music is changing, responding to the game play when you watch the action and listen to the music you get the sense of actually being in an interactive cartoon. It's not only kinetic it can also get quite chaotic—but it fits the medium."

Whether the music is cartoon-inspired rock and roll or calypso however most industry insiders don't see video game soundtracks attaining the level of respect in the United States and Europe that they have in Japan—at least not without users and the societies at large undergoing a major educational process. In other words, we have to open up our ears. While not being played on the top radio stations across the country there is an art form to making these tracks

Musical Termination: The Making of Terminator CD

The A&M Recording Studio in Hollywood is a virtual Tinseltown landmark. Behind its wrought-iron gates, music legends from several decades have done some of their best work. These days it's also become home to a new type of musical creation: video game soundtracks—the music that keeps joysticks jumping and players coming back for more.

Seated behind a gigantic mixing board sits Tommy Tallarico, Virgin's 24-year-old boy wonder who knocked critics out with his inventive backing tracks on *Global Gladiators* along with the 16 other projects he completed last year alone. His latest challenge, produce a sizzling soundtrack for the CD version of Virgin's *The Terminator* scheduled to be published by Sega this spring.

Just how one might wonder does someone of Tommy's tender years find himself in this exalted position? "It's kind of a funny story," he concedes. "I grew up on the East Coast and I always dreamed of coming out to California, so when I turned 22, I loaded up my car with my keyboards and clothes and headed west. I didn't know anybody of

QSound-3D for Your Ears

"I've been involved, in one way or another, with spatial sound processing for a lot of years," says Mark Steven Miller, president of Nu-Romantic Productions. "And I think the potential of QSound is the same potential as going from monophonic to stereophonic sound."

Pretty big words, but then QSound is a pretty impressive process. It requires no special equipment—two equidistant stereo speakers and a listener seated in the middle are the only components—and it provides audio cues in a 360-degree arena. Sounds can be heard to the left, the right, or even behind the player. Not only that, but the sounds can actually move, zooming from behind the player to a position in front of them in a heartbeat. The implications are incredible.

"When stereo was first introduced, listeners could actually have the sense of being in the room with the musicians while they were recording," recalls Mark Miller. "It created the sense of sitting in front of an orchestra and actually hearing the

placement of the instruments. Obviously, if you begin to surround a person with those sounds it's the next step toward virtual reality. I think people tend to underestimate how much of our emotional sense and our adrenal system are really tied into what we hear."

Virgin Games soundmeister Tommy Tallarico also likes QSound. In fact, his score for *Terminator* CD (see sidebar) will be the first major electronic game release to make use of the innovative new technology. "I first heard QSound," he recalls, "on a Sting album. And I read the insert on QSound and got all excited, but when I put the record on and started listening to it, you couldn't really hear anything special. Of course, one of the reasons for that was that, hey, this was a Sting album—they didn't want to fly guitar solos around your head. But the new QSound system—and ours is the very first project to use this new technology—was great for my purposes. The more stuff I have flying around, the cooler it sounds. Also, this new QSound system lets me use a joystick to actually direct the placement of the sounds. It allows me to control, in real time, any

of my 24 tracks. So all that QSound stuff you hear in *Terminator* is actually me, using a joystick, and throwing the sound wherever I want. I think it's definitely the future. Right now, I'm working with QSound to create different sound effects for the Sega CD, which may or may not show up in *Terminator*, where we can actually do explosions and jet fly-bys and stuff like that."

QSound has also arrived just in time to take advantage of the VR boom. "We're starting to see a lot more 3-D graphics and out-the-front-window perspectives," according to Mark Miller, "with the new chips being put in the Super NES and the 3DO machine and the Sega CD. Suddenly, sound that is coming from behind you can really be utilized as a play element, whereas in side-scrolling games it's a neat effect, but it doesn't really serve a function. I'm thinking about a product like *Sewer Shark* for the Genesis CD which Nu-Romantic worked on, mostly doing FM music. But if we could have encoded sound effects in QSound with, for example, sweeps from behind you to in front of you—there are a number of objects in the game



Sega's CD version of the Terminator II feature advanced sound techniques.

course and I wound up sleeping on the beach the first week was here had no place to live no contacts and no prospects didn't even know where to go wanted to be near L.A. but not in L.A. so thought: where does Mickey Mouse live? So ended up in Anaheim and got a job at Guitar Center. And the very first customer who came into the store that waited on was Virgin's Seth Mendelsohn. The next day got a job at Virgin."

A child prodigy he started playing the piano by ear when he was three. "My parents tried to bring in a teacher but he saw the way I played and decided it would be bad to try and teach me at that

while you are flying through this tube that come from behind you to in front of you that are important elements in the game play—QSound could have been incredibly powerful. As opposed to sounds just getting louder and then getting softer again as the sound passed in front of you and to the left in stereo, which is what we did. It was just an approximation, but with QSound, the sounds could have actually been placed in the back or wherever they belonged."

Another benefit of QSound is that it isn't necessary to record the entire sound track in that format—it's possible to record just the special effects and integrate them into an otherwise ordinary audio track.

So, while performers like Sting and Madonna don't really have the freedom or desire to take this technology to the limit, and since movie theaters are already entrenched in Dolby technology, TV and videogames may be the ideal format for this great audio innovation. We can probably expect some TV programs and games to utilize this technology soon.

QSound and video games—sounds like a perfect marriage.

—Bill Kunkel

point since it might interfere with my intuitive skills. So every time I heard someone Elvis or Jerry Lee Lewis or whoever I'd be able to go to the piano and just play it right back. Which is why I'm so heavily into the blues and rock; it comes from my heart rather than my head. When I was twelve I taught myself how to read music and got into jazz and classical music, but it was just too mechanical for me—I didn't connect with it very well."

Fortunately, Tommy also had a background in electronic gaming. "I grew up on the Intellivision. Every Intellivision cartridge that came out I had. And when I was 16 years old I worked in an arcade." And being a musician, as he played those games, he couldn't help but think how much better they'd be with a little rock and roll going on in the background.

Speaking of rock and roll backgrounds, Tommy's second cousin Steve Tallarico changed his last name to "Tyler" a while back and has been fronting a pretty fair rock band named Aerosmith for going on two decades.

It must be in the blood.

How much similarity we wondered is there between the film score for The Terminator and the game music? "Almost none," he told us. "What I did was, I bought the Terminator soundtrack and watched the movies of course and the only tune that really stuck with me was the actual Terminator theme, which really sets the ambience during the credit sequence. And since our game starts the same way, I thought it'd be really cool to use it. So we paid a certain amount of dollars for the use of the theme and it was a really good deal. The original song was about four-and-a-half minutes and I had about two-and-a-half minutes for the video game intro, so I sort of recreated it in the studio."

Just as game soundtracks have become popular in Japan, Virgin hopes to create a similar market here in the U.S. with the Terminator soundtrack designed as an independent audio entry. "We're putting **The Terminator** music out on an album which you'll be able to buy in any retail outlet. The guy in charge of marketing at Capital Records told me that 15% of the population are teenagers and they make up 50% of the market for recorded music. So you've got 15% of the population in this country buying half the records. That's my target group."

The recording of the **Terminator CD** soundtrack took place not only at A&M but at The Enterprise, another well-known L.A. studio. With the exception of a few

tracks which were laid down by electric guitar (Tommy won't say which ones everything was produced via synthesizer keyboards. "The system that I'm using is the Alesis ADAT. We used three of them for this project, and they're each eight tracks so we had 24-track digital. What would do is I would record all the instruments completely dry. For example, a drum you hear were done through a keyboard, don't use drum machines or preprogrammed stuff like that, because I can always tell when I hear a drum



Tommy Tallarico, shown in his studio, has delighted gamers with new sounds.

machine. So what do I do? I play a beat, as if I were playing it on the drums or play an actual drum beat and put it in the computer and just tweak it all day long. So everything is recorded completely dry and by dry I mean without digital delay or chorus or anything like that. Most of the guitar solos were done on keyboards and I would record distortion on the guitar to get a certain sound and the distortions were done here at Virgin, which we officially named the Virgin Music Factory."

The big question remains, will Virgin's heavy investment in sound pay off? Apparently the company isn't waiting to find out. "We've signed a deal with Capital Records to use a bunch of classic rock songs on the CD version of **Cool Spot**. For example, during the surfing scene we play 'Surfin' Safari. There's another scene where we use Sammy Hagar's cover of 'Dock of the Bay.'" Among the other artists featured on the CD are Duran Duran, Young M.C. and dinosaur rock giants Grand Funk Railroad, as Virgin strives to unite pop music and video games. While this might not be accomplished overnight, the outlook for future games that utilize recording tracks from top artists looks more and more appealing.

"That's my mission," says Tallarico. Sounds like he's up to it.

—Bill Kunkel

Chocolate Flavored Gaming A Visit to Hershey Park

by Russ Ceccola

Hershey, Pennsylvania is best known as the place where they make Hershey chocolate bars and other candies under the Hershey brand name. But the Hershey factory is almost a minor attraction compared to the nearby Hershey Park



The Minertown Arcade showcases many classic video and pinball machines.

amusement park, Hershey Stadium site of many concerts and sports contests) and Chocolate World, a place where people can buy all the Hershey food products and merchandise year-round, as well as ride a Disney-like attraction that shows visitors how Hershey chocolate bars and Kisses are made.

Yet another treat waits inside the Park for those lucky enough to break away from the rides, gift shops and skill games. Hershey Park houses one of the finest arcades in the country. The Minertown Arcade blends classic video games, newer uprights and sit-down games, the season's most popular arcade hits, pinball, redemption games and even air

hockey all under one roof in a location near the Kissing Tower and adjoining Zoo America.

Arcade fanatics walk into the Minertown Arcade expecting the commonplace. Instead they find gems in the back rows that they played years ago that incite comments like "Wow! They have THAT!?" and "I haven't seen that game in AGES!" Games like **Sinistar**, **Dig Dug**, **Ms.Pac-Man**, **Pac-Man**, **Venture**, **Asteroids** and even **Space Invaders** are likely to occupy a spot in the far recesses of the arcade. Even **Gorgar**, the first talking pinball game, sits among the group in the back row.

In addition to the new and old pinball machines and video games, Hershey Park has room to offer pieces that players can't find easily anywhere else, as well as a good variety of redemption games. Large games dot the floor of the gaming center like **Galaxy Force II** (in its rotating frame), 6-player **X-Men** uprights, Atari's **Heracles** pinball (classic oversized pinball), air hockey tables, **Super Chexx** (plexiglass-covered, rod-controlled hockey game), sit-down driving games and **Sonic Blast Man** (punching game). There are also Skee Ball



machines are strategically located and the entire arcade is handicapped-accessible. No smoking, eating or drinking is allowed in the arcade; this policy keeps the machines and floors immaculately clean, even in the midst of an amusement park and all of the sticky foods and drinks it offers. Four technicians keep the machines in working order; a paint shop and parts shop sit atop the arcade and adjoin a large freight elevator for moving machines.

The Minertown Arcade's building has housed an arcade of some sort for almost 20 years. Although there have been many changes over the years, the care with which the people at Hershey Park treat the arcade keeps it near the top of the list of best arcades in the country. Hershey Park also has smaller arcades at the other ends of the park if you feel the urge for a quick game.

If you'd like to visit Hershey Park and Chocolate World and spend some quarters in the Minertown Arcade, just call 1-800-HERSHEY for information and directions.

TOP 12 at Hershey Park in 1992 season

The following list of games shows a lot of diversity and a clear attraction of the players to **X-Men** and driving/riding games. It is ranked from highest money-earner to lowest.

1. Sonic Blast Man
2. X-Men (4-player version)
3. X-Men (6-player version)
4. Mad Dog McCre
5. GP Rider
6. Galaxy Force II
7. Suzuki 8 Hours
8. X-Men (4-player version from smaller arcade)
9. Road Riot
10. Hoop Shot
11. Final Lap
12. Hard Drivin'



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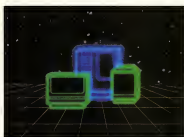
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VIDEO GAME GALLERY



Cool Spot

PUBLISHER	Sega/Virgin Games
SYSTEM	Genesis
THEME	Action
MEGABITS	8
PLAYERS	1
LEVELS	12
.....	
COMPLEXITY	Average
GRAPHICS	92%
SOUND	91%
PLAYABILITY	91%

OVERALL 92%

Help Cool Spot save all of his cool-uncola buddies.

Anybody who watches television frequently has seen 7-Up's commercials in which the red spot in the logo comes to life, hops off the bottle or can, and creates all sorts of mischief. "Spot," as he is known, is a feisty character with a lot of personality and a nose for trouble, not unlike another familiar (though now defunct) company mascot, Domino Pizza's Noid. Spot is not alone, either; some commercials feature a number of bottles whose spots come to life as Spot's friends.

A few years ago, Virgin Games saw the potential in Spot as a game character and licensed him for a strategy game simply called **Spot**, with a configurable board and game play resembling **Go**. Most recently, Virgin developed **Cool Spot** for Sega, an action game with all

the personality and fun of the 7-Up commercials, in which Spot journeys to rescue his friends locked up in cages.

From start to end, **Cool Spot** is an addictive game that will bring a smile or two to the face of even the most jaded player. Virgin handled every level and aspect of the game with humor and duplicated all the familiar sound effects and animation from the commercials.

Spot's personality really shines through. He jumps up and down behind the Sega logo after a power-up and continues to romp around the screen during the entire game (under player control of course). The animation, sound effects and game perspective together make **Cool Spot** a delightful, quirky game.

Each level of **Cool Spot** is a mini-quest to collect red spots strewn throughout the location and release Spot's caged friend. Spot jumps and climbs all over objects and fire bubbles to dispatch the various enemies.

He needs to collect at least 30 spots to release his friend. If he finishes the level with 75 or more spots, the player enters a bonus round. Those who collect all 100 spots get a huge point bonus, but that's a real challenge because the timer on each level doesn't leave much room for mistakes. The bonus level itself is a tough round, although players can earn more points and continue a letter of the word UNCOLA if they hurry Spot's little legs through the insides of a full

bubbly 7-Up bottle.

The backgrounds, graphics and animation are wonderfully done. All locations in the game are drawn from the perspective of Spot's eye level. This was a perfect choice because it helps each level look like one of the commercials.



The world is a big place for such a little spot. Enemies could be anywhere.

The first level takes place on the beach near a lone beach chair. Piper crabs and Hermit crabs attempt to wear Spot down. The second, third and fourth levels drop Spot in the middle of a pier attic and bathtub respectively. Players won't get stuck in **Cool Spot** because little Spot's hands point the direction to the cage.

As great as the colorful graphics are, the sound effects and music are even better. All of Spot's trademark noises and expressions made it into the game and players can try them out in the option menu's Sound FX selection. The game's music is lively and keeps the pace up. "Wipe Out" and other somewhat familiar tunes are the levels' themes.

Players become skillful at **Cool Spot** quickly, but the three difficulty levels keep the game interesting and challenging. Virgin did a great job of capturing the look and sounds of the Spot commercials and putting them into an action-packed video game.

— Russ Ceccola



Don't just spend your time hanging around, save your little spot friends.



Dream Probe

PUBLISHER	Renovation
SYSTEM	SNES
THEME	Action
MEGABITS	8
PLAYERS	1
LEVELS	N/A
.....	
COMPLEXITY	Average
GRAPHICS	84%
SOUND	85%
PLAYABILITY	87%

OVERALL 85%

Can you survive battling the evil mutations in Dream Probe?

Nothing good can come from a Japanese science experiment gone astray! Like one of those giant insect movies of the '50s and '60s, **Dream Probe** features a host of mutated creatures in a dream world brought to life by the science fair entry of a Japanese student named Surreal. One of Renovation's first entries for the Super NES, this shows off their savvy with the equipment's capabilities and effects. **Dream Probe** is a fairly simplistic arcade game, but has creative monsters, gorgeous graphics and a good selection of musical themes.

The Dream Probe is a device to let people project their dreams onto a televi-

sion or monitor for others to view. Two Chicago teachers, Ron and Maria, heard of Surreal's device and invited her to their city's science fair to demonstrate the Probe.

At the fair Surreal hooked her-

self up to the Probe and went to sleep. The dreams on the monitor started off innocently enough, but soon turned sinister. Unable to awaken Surreal, Ron and Maria realized that the only way that they could save her from her nightmares was to enter the dreams through the Probe and find her. Even before they could act on their own, Surreal drew them into the Probe to come to her defense. Either Maria or Ron moves around in Dream Probe. They have similar powers, but Maria grows a butterfly-like shell and Ron just gets stronger.

Dream Probe is basically a "level/boss" game, but there is enough variety in the presentation and the creatures, including the bosses, that play passes as fresh. The player guides Ron or Maria through Surreal's nightmares and confronts the enormous insects that lie in wait.

The first stage consists of standard side-scrolling action, but takes place in the devastated remains of Tokyo. There are elevators to different floors, some of which lead to dead ends and require backtracking. Stage 2 is more of the same, but in Tokyo's subway. In addition to the normal creatures flying overhead and running by, some attach themselves to the subway cars and jump off to attack when the car speeds across the platform.

The third stage is a vertical-scroller inside a rising glass elevator against Tokyo's crumbling skyline. Pods on the ceiling and floor hatch creatures. The fourth stage throws some dissolving ledges into the action against a cherry blossom-strewn area. In stage 5, the only single-chapter stage, the terrain speeds by automatically and the monsters move just as fast. The last stage requires great control and even better aim through caves to the final boss. The shift in game play from the levels keeps

Dream Probe interesting; there are already too many side-scrollers with no variations.

The variety is average, but the monsters are excellent and challenging. Renovation animated some pretty impressive insects, although none are too difficult to beat. Many enemies make use of the Mode 7 see-through effect so that they have the structure of jellyfish. But the bosses take on a life and atti-



Find your way through the maze-like office building while fighting the mutants.

tude of their own. Each has an Achilles heel that's a little bit tough to hit without any damage to the player. There are two flying insects that attack relentlessly, and land-based creatures that block the path to the next stage.

Game play is very simple. Buttons control jump, attack and dream bomb; the L and R buttons make the character run. Certain insects drop colored dream proteins when they die; the game's power-ups for weapons, life level and shield.

The challenges come from three difficulty levels. The harder levels reduce the number of proteins dropped and increase the number of dream creatures.

The graphics are quite colorful with high detail. The backgrounds are particularly nice and feature skylines with neon signs and even an electrical light parade during the final battle. The mixture of scrolling effects and detail keep **Dream Probe** visually attractive.

There are 14 impressive themes to create atmosphere. The sound effects are also nice; players can sample the music and effects in the configuration menu as in most new Genesis games. One particular laughing (crying?) sound is quite strange and chilling.

Renovation did a good job with **Dream Probe** on the Super NES. While this may not be the type of game for everyone, most people will enjoy their visit to Surreal's nightmares.

— Russ Ceccola





VIDEO GAME GALLERY



Jack Nicklaus Power Challenge Golf

PUBLISHER	Accolade
SYSTEM	Genesis
THEME	Sports
MEGABITS	8
PLAYERS	1-4
LEVELS	N/A
.....	
COMPLEXITY	Average
GRAPHICS	86%
SOUND	84%
PLAYABILITY	92%

OVERALL 87%

Here is a chance to play golf with the famous Golden Bear.

Anyone who has seen **Jack Nicklaus Golf & Course Design** or the Signature edition for IBM will quickly recognize that **Jack Nicklaus Power Challenge Golf (PCG)** is the same game sans the course design features. **PCG** comes with two courses, Sherwood Country Club and English Turn Golf and Country Club. To begin play the player must first create a new club member. From this menu the player inputs name, gender (women's shots are 10% shorter but they can play from forward tees), tee and skill selections and the photo that will represent them. The battery backup is a great feature as all member files and statistics are retained in RAM so it is usually only necessary to access this menu once for each player, unless the player desires to change skill levels.

The three ski levels are beginner, advanced and expert. At the beginner level the computer makes all club selections, course conditions have minimal effect on shots, and the timing of the players' swing is not critical. At this level all shots tend to go straight even if the player grossly over swings or misses the wrist snap entirely. This is a good skill setting if one wants to include small children in a foursome as it will preclude them from getting frustrated. At the advanced level the computer still makes all club selections but wind and player swing timing become more important. At the expert level the player must choose the correct club for the distance, course conditions have an accurate affect on ball trajectory and inconsistencies in the player's swing are immediately evident.

With a player-character registered at the clubhouse, one has the option of playing solo, rounding out the foursome with other human players or competing against any number of computer players, including the Golden Bear himself. The computer opponents range in skill from beginners, who can turn a 430 yard par 4 into a 700 yard double bogey through decent hackers to the Professionals. Players should not shy away from going head to head with Jack Nicklaus because the game is skewed in their favor. Player characters can drive farther than the computer opponents, so, once one has



Before playing a hole it would be best to talk it over with Jack, for a hint.

mastered swing timing and approach shots, most contests will come down to putting out. Another consideration which can work to the advantage of advanced players is that computer opponents play conservative golf. Consequently if one is willing to take some risks, it is often possible to come out way ahead.

The default method of play is Championship Skins, a \$36,000 match with single hole prizes of \$1,000, \$2,000 and \$3,000 for each set of six holes. Players may edit the total prize amount and the

program will redistribute among the holes appropriately. Alternately the player may elect to compete in a tournament on either of the courses from 1-4 rounds of play. Up to 72 members can compete in a tournament but only four may be human controlled. During tournament play the leader board is updated every hole and players will be challenged to



There are plenty of variables to consider before making an important shot for par.

place in the top five. One thing that does aid this quest for glory is practice and **PCG** offers several options to refine player skills. A driving range and practice green are standard fare but the player may also elect to practice any particularly troublesome hole as often as desired.

PCG's play mechanic is identical to its predecessors. The control bar is located on the bottom 1/5 of the screen and the player times his swing through three clicks on the power bar. The first click sets the club in motion, the second begins the down swing, and the third sets the wrist snap. Allowing the power to go into the red zone (over swinging) can increase the range for each club, but the slightest deviations from the exact wrist snap mark (at the expert level) leads to hooks and slices. On the putting green an unobtrusive light green grid overlay shows the contour and allows the player to aim accordingly.

Jack Nicklaus Power Challenge Golf is graphically identical to its bigger brothers, with the exception of some minor pixelation differences. Additionally, the sound files seem to have ported over without distortion. The crowd still swoons and applauds at nice shots and the epron this review was written from appears flawless in every other respect. It would have been nice to have more courses to play but random pin placement keeps these courses viable for a long time.

—Ed Dille

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VIDEO GAME GALLERY



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Sorcerer's Kingdom

PUBLISHER	American Sammy
SYSTEM	Genesis
THEME	RPG
MEGABITS	8
PLAYERS	1
LEVELS	n/a
.....	
COMPLEXITY	Average
GRAPHICS	84%
SOUND	70%
PLAYABILITY	76%

OVERALL 78%

Sorcery and swordplay mix to make a magical adventure.

It's a big world in there and easy to get lost in, one way or another. **Sorcerer's Kingdom** is an 8-Meg adventure/RPG. The learning curve may be intimidating to the novice adventurer and possibly to the moderately advanced as well. The player starts as a boy commissioned by the king to rid the land of evil. Along the way he can gather friends of varying strength and abilities in his party. But before almost anything else he has to get past that first bunch of goblins.

The unique element in this particular RPG is what Treco/American Sammy calls its Analog Growth System (AGS). This means that the player's characters can not only gain strength and power through experience as with most such games, but if left unused, those advantages can be lost!

After that, however, the plot line hangs on an all-too-familiar skeleton. The interface is graphically familiar, but simplified. Perhaps oversimplified—only the Start button, Direction pad and B and C buttons are active; A is completely unused. The C button performs a variety of functions depending on context.

The view is essentially top-down with enough of an angle

that people (and other animate things) may disappear behind buildings or trees, and the view window fills the screen. Characters are small and foreshortened though not quite the standard stubby Flintstone beings that populate many video games. Most non-player characters (NPCs) wander around in random patterns until confronted. Sometimes they're rather pushy about it, though happily not so bad as the monsters.

When confronted each NPC generally has something to say of varying degrees of usefulness. Some of them may have new information in subsequent meetings, but most just repeat themselves. There is no option for dialogue. The writers evidence some humor, such as a small boy who wants to play with our hero's sword or the stuffy knight who reluctantly offers some advice. English may be a second language for him and some of the other characters. "You can get information at the taverns to help you on your quest."

Status, equipment and activity windows, and a map are available at the touch of the C button. The map magically advises where the player's character is and where he's been, but the land is big



At the various shops, many of the items needed for the quest may be bought.



enough that details are not quickly discerned. When he and his party (when appropriate) succeeds at certain efforts, a symbol appears on the map to advise him (or them) to return to the palace for advancement in status.

Up to three games (or 'chronicles') may be saved upon staying at an inn while in any town. It's desirable to open one early, if for no other reason than not to have to reenter the character's name (there is no default) and go through the otherwise unskippable prologue and audience with the king. There is no demo mode, by the way.

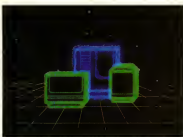
The learning curve involves more than just finding one's way through towns or the woods. It takes a while to start recognizing who's who, and where to find what. The player's character has to learn by trial and error. Even getting initial information is like pulling teeth. For example, at the very beginning of the game, he is advised by a couple of people he bumps into on the street to get information from the Wizard of the Hill, found west of town. Our hero has to get by a bunch of goblins to get there. He's low on hit points now and he's died a few times confronting the goblins, so he sneaks by them to see if he can find the mysterious wizard and learn something.

So what happens when he does meet the old fellow? The wizard asks him to get rid of the goblins. Presumably he'll talk to him then.

Well, okay—it's battling and vanquishing his foes that gets him stronger and more hit points. It can be done. But at this rate, how long is it going to take him to get anywhere in this game? And then there's that AGS factor to deal with.

It is a challenge. **Sorcerer's Kingdom** has considerable potential for the fantasy adventure fan with time to spare.

— Ross Chamberlain



VIDEO GAME GALLERY



Mario is Missing

PUBLISHER	Software Toolworks
SYSTEM	SNES
THEME	Educational
MEGABITS	4
PLAYERS	1
LEVELS	N/A
.....	
COMPLEXITY	Average
GRAPHICS	85%
SOUND	85%
PLAYABILITY	95%

OVERALL 87%

Mario is Missing leads players on an educational quest.

Bowser and his bad boys have returned to their lives of crime. Unfortunately they have departed Mario's World and come to Earth. Bowser has established a base in Antarctica, from which he hustles the disagreeable Koopas into his Passcode Operated Remote Transport And Larceny System (PORTALS). The evil turtles transport themselves through the globe where well-known cities suffer crime waves as the Koopas loot ancient artifacts. Mario, Luigi and Yoshi leave their Brooklyn abode to trek across ice and snow to stop the Koopa crime wave and halt Bowser's schemes. But Bowser has one last trick up his sleeve: he kidnaps Mario.

Mario is Missing presents the player as Luigi with three challenges: stop the Koopas, circumvent Bowser's plan, and

find Mario. Bowser's castle comprises three levels, each with five PORTALS which open up to different cities. Luigi must sneak into each PORTAL and transport to a city in trouble. Once in the city, Luigi must capture each Koopa, take its loot, and return the missing artifact to the proper landmark. Along the way the player explores the city, talks with locals, reads maps, and solves puzzles.

The Brooklyn plumber is not empty-handed: his toolbox contains resources for all emergencies. One of the tools is the artifact keeper. Some of the Koopas Luigi captures will be carrying stolen artifacts that must be returned to the correct information booth, but without the artifact keeper all the player sees is a plain brown bag. Luigi also has a computer in his toolbox that records conversations with the city denizens and keeps any pamphlets he collects. The Globulator allows Luigi to call Yoshi from Antarctica once the player discovers what continent, country and city he is in. If the player's selection is correct, Luigi will be seen riding Yoshi and traveling much faster. Once Luigi returns all the stolen artifacts, Yoshi helps him scare away the Pokey guarding the exit PORTAL. The City Map shows the whole city layout, including Luigi, Koopas, local citizens, sewer



Lead Luigi through various cities in search of his lost brother Mario.

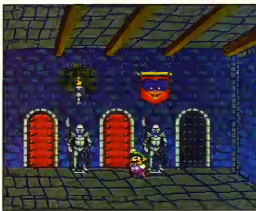
the curator will congratulate Luigi, give him a reward, and let him take a snapshot for his photo album. If a question is answered incorrectly, the curator sends Luigi away and won't immediately give the player another chance.

The graphics in **Mario is Missing** combine the familiarity of the Mario sidescrollers with geographically correct backgrounds for different cities. For example, Beijing has several pagoda-style buildings, while San Francisco has townhouse signs. Signs on the buildings range from Chinese characters to English advertisements. Disappointingly, the five citizens Luigi encounters are identical, which detracts from cultural diversity that

Mario is Missing attempts to foster

an interesting blend of classical Mario themes and regional selections. The variety of background music is important as it is not possible to toggle the sound off.

Mario is Missing is a very playable game. After each PORTAL is sealed, a code appears so that the player can quit and return later. At the end of each level, Luigi battles Bowser to gain access to the next floor. The mystery of not knowing which city will be



pipe tunnels (which facilitate travel) and information booths. The Photo Album stores pictures of the famous landmarks that Luigi has restored.

At each information booth, Luigi will be given a pamphlet with details about the corresponding landmark. The pamphlet may or may not be sufficient to answer the curator's questions in order to validate Luigi's artifact. It is important to communicate with the local citizens in order to gain extra clues and hints. If the two-question quiz is completed correctly

behind the PORTAL adds to the excitement of play. Because this is an edutainment game, Luigi does not die, and the scoring is based on the amount of time spent in each city. The less time spent, the higher the score. **Mario is Missing** successfully encourages the development of geography, navigational, and reasoning skills.

The first of five planned Mario Brothers edutainment products, **Mario is Missing** shows great promise as a series.

—Laurie Yates

AMERICAN GLADIATORS

PRESS START BUTTON

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American Gladiators

PUBLISHER	GameTek
SYSTEM	Genesis
THEME	Sports
MEGABITS	8
PLAYERS	1-8
LEVELS	5
.....	
COMPLEXITY	Easy
GRAPHICS	80%
SOUND	75%
PLAYABILITY	91%

OVERALL 75%

Are you good enough to beat the American Gladiators?

Variety is the main attraction of this action title based on the syndicated sports show. As on television, one or more entrants test their athletic skill against powerful gladiators in six events: Assault, Joust, the Wal, Atlasphere Powerball and the Eliminator. The last is the multi-phase marathon that concludes the competition.

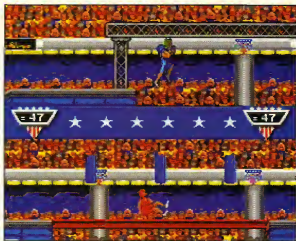
American Gladiators incorporates two modes of play. Two humans can vie against each other for the highest score in the six-part gauntlet. In some events like Joust and Assault, video gamers alternate against machine-directed rivals but there's more of a head-to-head feel in games like the Wal, Powerball, Atlasphere and the Eliminator.

The Tournament mode provides seven

robot adversaries. The player must defeat three opponents en route to the championship.

The selection of events is better than any of GameTek's previous attempts to turn this license into a game. Getting rid of Cannonball is definitely addition-by-subtraction, and events like Atlasphere and Powerball can get so exciting that many wish there was a way to just play epic-length versions of each.

The designers' use of simple play-mechanics is probably appropriate for a cart that includes so many radically different contests. These strike a comfortable balance between playability and complexity. There's enough meat to hold



Fast hands and steady feet are a must in order to triumph at the joust event.

the gamer's interest, but no one will have to study the well-produced documentation to figure out most of the rules.

The quality of the events varies tremendously. The Eliminator is more fun in this version than in previous **American Gladiators** electronic games, but it's still a fairly humdrum side-scroller.

On the other hand, Assault has good graphics in two perspectives and is quite entertaining. The player moves up the field toward the cannon, controlled by a gladiator on a vertically scrolling, modified overhead perspective display. When the contestant reaches one of the weapons stations, a three-dimensional view of the situation appears so that the gamer can aim and fire at the target.

Powerball and Atlasphere provide

simultaneous two-player excitement in twin display windows positioned side by side on the screen. Unfortunately the active areas in both games are very small, seriously inhibiting the flow of the action. (The linearity of The Eliminator permits use of a horizontally divided screen, which gives a fine view of the event as it unfolds.)

The small square screens in Atlasphere and Powerball, however, required the use of fairly small characters. The animation is good in both cases, but the tiny figures don't allow for a lot of complex blocking and maneuvering.

The Joust involves very large on-screen figures and may be the best looking of the six. Unfortunately it is also the least enjoyable. There aren't enough moves, the animation is too stiff and lacks detail, and the strategy is too limited.

Don't listen for the familiar theme from the TV series, because you won't hear it. The substitute music is acceptable, but it lacks the authentic quality of the real theme. Sound effects are adequate.

The most notable lack in **American Gladiators** is the near absence of frills and embellishments. Missing are close-ups of the individual gladiators, a practice mode, and other features that would have enhanced the play experience. The inability to concentrate on one event at a time to perfect technique is frustrating.

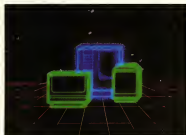
Multi-event sports anthologies used to be quite common in electronic gaming, but there have been few such titles recently. For this reason, **American Gladiators** may appeal to action sports fans.

Mainstream action gamers may not be quite as favorable. This is not a bad product, but it doesn't have the superb audiovisuals and riveting involvement of the best titles.

—Amie Katz



The SNES version features digitized photos of all of your favorite Gladiators.



VIDEO GAME GALLERY



First Samurai

PUBLISHER	Kemco
SYSTEM	SNES
THEME	Action
MEGABITS	4
PLAYERS	1
LEVELS	5
.....	
COMPLEXITY	Average
GRAPHICS	88%
SOUND	89%
PLAYABILITY	93%

OVERALL 90%

In ancient Japan, a warrior must live and die with honor.

Video games steeped heavily in Japanese history and mythology have had mixed success in the United States. Most suffered the fate of **Psycho Fox**, a nearly incomprehensible and justly-forgotten Sega SMS twitch game based on archetypes from the Shinto tradition told with funny animals.

First Samurai however is different. It has class and a story that almost elevates it beyond the status of another generic side-scroller. The programming is so slick and the play action so responsive that the game is simply more fun to play than it really deserves to be.

The background story line skillfully related in the excellent manual concerns an ancient power triangle. Back in Nipponese antiquity, the Demon King (not a good guy) ruled the mountain realm and

hoped to extend his power over all humanity. His ambition was thwarted for centuries by the Wizard Mage and the Master Sensei. Unfortunately while the Wizard and the Demon King were immortals, the Sensei was flesh and blood kept alive for so many years only through the powers of the Wizard Mage. Once the Sensei began to feel his power wane, he began to instruct an apprentice in what would become known eventually as the arts of the Samurai.

But the Demon King was watching all this, and chose the perfect, vulnerable moment to attack and kill the Sensei. Arriving in time to see his long-time partner perish, the Wizard prepared to strike only to have the Demon King escape into the far future.

Now with the Sensei dead, the Mage must forge a new alliance with the boy prodigy, whom he immediately envelops in his time-thwarting magical mist. The Mage it seems, only operates through a symbiosis with a mortal such as the student. Although his training was never completed, the Wizard has no choice but to send the untested boy the **First Samurai** of the game's title immediately after the weakened Demon King.

Thus begins a journey through the ages, with the Samurai battling the Demon King's minions and evading his traps in a variety of arenas. Five mystic runes lay hidden in each era and once the Samurai has collected them, he can challenge the Demon King's boss henchman of that time period for the right to move on down the timeline and, ultimately, take on the Demon King himself.

The Samurai performs all the standard side-scrolling activities—movement, jumping, and climbing—in addition to his wielding weapons and throwing punches. An interesting play mechanic forces the player-character to kill demons in order to maintain a Force Meter rating (indicating the strength of his spirit). When the rating drops below 70%, the Samurai can no longer use his Sensei's Great Katana (Samurai sword) and must face the forces of the Demon King bare handed.

Power-ups include magical bells which summon the Wizard Mage's help in tough situations. The Wizard can knock down barriers, create bridges, invoke storms and perform a variety of other extremely useful activities. Also scattered about the playscapes are Force Pots, interestingly portrayed milestone



markers. When the Samurai reaches a Force Pot, he can kneel down and activate its power. Thereafter, he can use another power-up, the Warp Lanterns, to transport instantly to the most recently activated Force Pot. If he loses a life, he is similarly transported back to the last Pot.

There are also treasures, food, extra weapons everything from shuriken to hand grenades and the extremely cool Demon's Bane, a smart-bomb feature which when touched turns the Mage's lethal power against any on-screen demons.

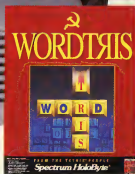
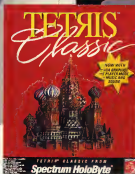
The Journey through time doesn't involve a lot of historical sight-seeing. The first level is the mystic past where the game begins. The Samurai must take out the army of lesser-demons left behind to protect the mountain realm. The bosses here are a pair of dragon twins, and their defeat propels the Samurai aboard the (no joke) "Time Travel Express Train." Next stop: Tokyo 1999, the location to which the Demon King originally transported himself. Without anyone there to defend it, Tokyo fell to his army and the Demon King moved on. If the Samurai can get past the Tokyo bosses, he takes the "Time Elevator" (what, no British phone booths?) to the third and final stage, the Demon Palace. Here the player-character takes on a gallery of heavy duty demons with attractive monickers like "Corpse" and "Slaughter" on his way to challenge the big bad guy himself.

The graphics are richly colored and nicely animated. The special effects are frequently quite special and the sound effects enhance the game experience. And there's just enough puzzle-solving to keep the brain involved in the process.

First Samurai won't win any awards for innovation but it is a first rate example of what a side-scrolling action game should be.

—Bill Kunkel

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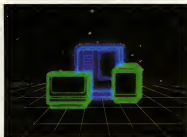
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VIDEO GAME GALLERY



Battle Blaze

PUBLISHER	American Sammy
SYSTEM	SNES
THEME	Fighting
MEGABITS	8
PLAYERS	1-2
LEVELS	7
.....	
COMPLEXITY	Average
GRAPHICS	92%
SOUND	79%
PLAYABILITY	86%

OVERALL 82%

Steel and fangs clash as man and beast join for battle.

This is a straightforward martial arts contest of weapon-wielders all trapped in a story of demons and barbarian kings. It's not bad as such things go, and it is a slight break from the street-fighters, ninjas and kung-fu artists.

Let's get the background story out of the way which is what American Sammy did to make it easy to get on with the game. The title screen is a fine painting of a barbarian warrior threatening the viewer while behind him fire waves like a wheatfield. If the controls are left alone in lieu of a demo mode the story starts to scroll up the screen. Once that's past, a code screen comes up, offering direct access to any of the various battle modes. Unfortunately the fancy font used for the codes, perhaps really neat on a monitor, is unreadable on a regular

TV screen (This also severely interferes with entering one's name in the awards screen, later on)

The story takes place in a reportedly peaceful land called Virg, where the king is routinely chosen by a tournament of champion fighters. But a demon wants to ruin everything as demons are wont to do and sends out phantoms that possess all but four of the five challengers. The fifth one Darrill succeeds in remaining unpossessed but is so weakened that his son Kerrell takes on the challenge. That's it!

A map comes up, showing four localities. Clicked on a portrait of the resident champion is shown along with a summary of weapons and relative strengths. Adrick of Naxus, a princely swordsman uses a long blade; Lord Gustoff of Gromoor a muscular half-orc, uses a mace. Tesya of Fynn an athletic woman fights with twin daggers, and Shnouzer of Cricket Beach the man-beast, doesn't need a separate weapon. Kerrel is represented once the battles begin as a barbarian type complete with loin-cloth and mighty sword.



In Hero mode the player must travel the land, battling the various monsters.

The player selects among these in Hero mode, the single-player game. In Battle the two-player game the selections include a Kerrel clone called Lang. An options screen allows a choice of standard or beginner difficulty levels, and between winning terms of two out of

three (default) or three out of five (This screen also lets the player listen to the 17 music score selections and 47 sound effects, of which three quarters are variations on the moans and cries of the wounded.)

Battles take place on arenas in Naxus, Gromoor Fynn and Cricket Beach. In single-player mode at least, this means playing on the home turf of each of the combatants. Loop animation effects add



to these scenes, keeping water flowing in Fynn for example. The arenas are about two screens wide scrolling to keep the combatants visible.

Button and keypad combinations are the key to battling. Some are common to all combatants and others are specialized. The variety is naturally more significant in the dual-player mode. However, some approaches are more effective against one than another even in the Hero scenarios, because of the different techniques used by each combatant.

The heroic winner of all battles (or at least of two out of three against each opponent) gets to go up against the demon. Suffice it to say even the player who breezes through all the other matches will be challenged here!

Battle Blaze is not for everyone especially anyone who might have trouble urging his hulking barbarian to smash the lthe Tesya to the ground. But the presentation is graphically delightful with no annoying flicker and the musical score is sufficiently varied to avoid ennui at least in the early hours of play.

—Ross Chamberlain



Pocky & Rocky

PUBLISHER	Natsume
SYSTEM	Super NES
THEME	Action
MEGABITS	8
PLAYERS	1 or 2
LEVELS	6
.....	
COMPLEXITY	Average
GRAPHICS	93%
SOUND	99%
PLAYABILITY	90%

OVERALL 94%

Pocky and Rocky: Unsung Video Game Heroes.

When this year has ended and all the awards for achievement in games have been dolled out, one game that will probably get lost in the shuffle will be Natsume's **Pocky & Rocky**

That's a real shame because what appears to be on the surface as a



Rocky uses his Magic Tail to send enemy shots right back at them!

"cuteness" little kid's game is one of the most original, fun and challenging games around.

The title refers to the game's two main characters. Rocky is a young girl who uses throwing cards for attack and magic stick for defense, while Rocky is a big orange raccoon who uses leaves for attack and his magic tail to defend himself

The story is rather simple: years ago, Pocky put down an uprising by a group called the Nopino Goblins. Now these same goblins are becoming restless again. However Rocky who is a Nopino goblin has been attacked by his fellow Nopinos, and appears to be immune to their restless behavior. Then Rocky realized that the Nopinos were being controlled by an awesome evil force. Now together with Pocky, the two set out to find what is causing this disturbance.

The viewpoint of the game is from overhead with a two-player option allowing simultaneous two-player action. In the one-player option, the gamer can play as Pocky or Rocky.

Pocky and Rocky each have different powers. Pocky walks a little faster than Rocky slides faster and has a special attack where she spins around like a top, swatting enemies with her Magic Stick. Rocky on the other hand moves a little slower but his slide is longer than Pocky's and has a special move where he briefly turns into a stone statue. Everything that touches him while he is in this status is harmed. Together there is a team move where one player can slide into the other. When this is done the player slid into goes spinning around the screen, destroying everything he or she touches and is immune to harm. However be careful when doing this move you can shove a partner off a cliff and to his or her death in some levels when this move is performed.

In terms of moves, one aspect that makes **Pocky and Rocky** distinct is their defending moves. The gamer can use Pocky's Magic Stick and Rocky's Magic Tail to swat projectiles back at their enemies and do harm to them for a change. Rocky's swatting of his Magic Tail is adorable and makes him the cutest character in the game.

To help the duo along in their quest are a series of power-ups and health items. There are items that increase card- and leaf-throwing abilities as well as fireball icons that allow one to throw fire. The intensity of these weapons can be upgraded as well, but if, for example, a player has fireballs at the fully charged level and he or she tags the leaf-throwing item, their attack power will go to the lowest attack power for that item. There are also Bombs that function differently for each character: Rocky's Bomb explodes in an ever-widening circle that destroys all on screen. Pocky's Bomb explodes in four directions and doesn't cover such a wide area but causes more damage. Beware though, sometimes the baskets contain enemies that burst on



The two-player option allows Pocky and Rocky to fight as a team.

the screen with a little sign that says "Sorry!" There are also hidden people that will dispense power-ups in the game. These are called "Help Men" and take the form of statues, birds and other things. When one of these is hit, the "Help Man" will float in the air and reward the player with a grab bag of items. The latter is a dog the player can ride around the screen and be immune from harm. Both these items are only helpful for a limited time.

Game play is divided up into six levels, each shown on a "master map" like that in Super Ghouls 'n Ghosts. Starting at the Haunted Shrine and ending at the Battle with Black Mantle, each stage has a boss character, with some having both a boss and mid-boss.

After each boss is defeated, there is a cinema setting up the next stage. The graphics are excellent, especially in these cinemas, with running conversation between the two. Each level is extremely challenging and well constructed, with some levels containing changing weather conditions (such as the first level with a rainstorm occurring halfway through). Some other levels include a ride down a diver in a raft, a journey through a mist-swirling graveyard, a battle on a giant airborne battleship, and a run through a dungeon in the Forbidden Castle. The Forbidden Castle is particularly well done, with former enemies now prisoners behind bars, shedding tears and begging you to help them.

Then there is the music. **Pocky and Rocky** has a beautiful musical score. The oriental music goes perfectly with each level. The music is practically half of what makes the game so special.

In terms of difficulty, **Pocky and Rocky** will give the experienced gamer a run for his or her money.

Although early in the year, **Pocky & Rocky** should be noted for its originality and challenging game play. This is one game that deserves recognition.

— Mike Weigand

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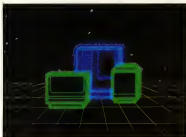
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VIDEO GAME GALLERY



StarFox

PUBLISHER	Nintendo
SYSTEM	SNES
THEME	Action
MEGABITS	8
PLAYERS	1
LEVELS	12
.....	
COMPLEXITY	Average
GRAPHICS	94%
SOUND	86%
PLAYABILITY	92%

OVERALL 95%

Nintendo's Super FX chip makes an amazing debut.

The highly anticipated Super Nintendo title **StarFox** is here and the question now is, Was it worth the wait?

The answer is an unequivocal yes on a variety of fronts. Yes **StarFox** takes



There are several different paths to take varying mainly in length and difficulty

cartridge games to a new level. Yes, **StarFox** has an unusually good feel for a 3D polygon game. And yes, the SFX chip works.

The SFX chip is the heart and soul of this great new shooter. Designed in England by Argonaut Software, the chip manages to accelerate polygon graphics to the point of smooth animation. Without the help of this special chip built into the cartridge, the Super Nintendo would not be able to independently create the eye-popping visuals evident in **StarFox**.

Although **StarFox** would be classified as a shooter it is far from typical. From the beginning of the game, it is apparent that Nintendo not only produced a good-looking, good-playing game but also made an extra effort to create an interesting storyline with good characters.



The player assumes the role of Fox McCloud, leader of the **StarFox** squadron. As McCloud, the player must negotiate several levels of intergalactic mayhem while keeping an eye on his partners in combat, if not the barnyard Teammates include: Falco Lombardi (a maverick but loyal rooster), Peppy Hare (a level-headed rabbit), and Slippy Toad (a somewhat aloof amphibian).

Although the characters provide an interesting twist and give some depth to the **StarFox** storyline by occasionally appearing on the screen, they are not really a central element of the game. An accomplished pilot can amass extra points at the end of each level by keeping his wing men alive but interaction with the characters is not required to successfully complete the game.

StarFox is broken down into three main levels, each set apart by its degree of difficulty. Although the player can skip the first two levels and go straight to the

most difficult level the player is better off honing his piloting skills in the lower levels and getting comfortable with the heart-pounding game play.

Level one sets up the storyline and introduces the player to his partners. In this level, the group accustoms themselves to their experimental fighters known as Arwings and enters the cosmic gauntlet set up by the evil Emperor Andross.

The Arwing fighters are equipped with an unlimited-firing blaster and a limited supply of Nova bombs that blow up everything on the screen. Through various power-up opportunities throughout the game, the player can acquire double-shot blasters or a shield that makes the players Arwing impervious to enemy attacks for a limited time. Collecting

power-ups becomes increasingly critical as later levels whiz by at a more frenetic pace with quicker enemies and tougher bosses.

All in all for a cartridge-based home video game system **StarFox** is a fantastic and important game.

The game is great because it strikes a harmonious balance between style and substance. **StarFox** is unique in that it advances the state-of-the-art

in a highly playable game. When new technology is introduced in video games, such as the CD phenomenon it usually takes programmers a few attempts before they fully maximize the potential of the new technology. Rarely does a first generation game of a new technology become a blockbuster.

With **StarFox**, however Nintendo has gotten it right the first time. From 3D graphics, to rock-solid game play to an interesting storyline **StarFox** has all the aesthetics that will make it a bona fide winner.

StarFox is also important from the standpoint that it has pushed the technology envelope of cartridge-based games to a new level. In 1993 when CD-based games appear to be the wave of the future **StarFox** demonstrates that the demise of cartridge-based games has been exaggerated.

— Joe Funk

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VIDEO GAME GALLERY



Rock & Roll Racing

PUBLISHER	Interplay
SYSTEM	Super NES
THEME	Racing
MEGABITS	8
PLAYERS	1 or 2
LEVELS	N/A
.....	
COMPLEXITY	Average
GRAPHICS	83%
SOUND	86%
PLAYABILITY	85%

OVERALL 85%

Experience one of a kind inter-galactic racing action.

"The stage is set, the green flag drops. * With these words the gamer has begun the latest racing game Rock & Roll Racing! As far as racing games go, Rock & Roll Racing is probably one of the funnest, funnest and best racing games around

The game play is a little like R.C. PRO-AM the gamer races a car around a track, armed with missiles and other goodies to blow away other racers and win the race. However the tracks are given more dimension as is the music: several classic rock tunes, like Steppenwolf's "Born to be Wild" and Henri Mancini's "Peter Gunn Theme" fill the background while one races (or in some cases, battle it out) to finish first.

The races are on several different planets, each with different terrains. When

the game starts, one can select three different types of cars, a sports car, a jeep, or a vehicle that is a combination of the two called a dirt devil. There are also over 50 tracks to race on

There are also different racers one can choose to race as. Each is from a different planet and has different strengths and weaknesses (some take turns better etc.)

The objective is to place as high as one can in order to obtain the maximum cash award in order to purchase upgrades for their vehicle. These upgrades can make one's car a real force to be reckoned with and leave other racers in the dust or in pieces. However some of the items, especially



The two-player split-screen allows rough competition for an intense race.

the missiles and slip sauce, are of a limited number and their quantity can be expired. Not to worry, though each time one runs out of these items, they are replenished when a lap is completed and the finish line is crossed.

The first track is on pillars high above what appears to be a swamp of green ooze. Surrounding the track are long, pointy spikes as well as giant gun turrets. The player is given a certain amount of money at the start to buy a car and several options. These options include upgrades on tires, engines, shock absorbers, and three special weapons: missiles, tacks to make other drivers slide aptly called "slip sauce" and nitro boosters to give a sudden burst of lightning speed. If you use the missiles on opponents during the race and blow them to bits, they will be penalized a few seconds, then reappear on the track where they were destroyed and resume the race.

Each track is filled with hairpin turns jumps and other hazards. The jumps are particularly tricky if the gamer has enough speed or uses the nitro blast at the wrong moment, he or she will jump up over the guard rail and crash into the



Jumps must be timed very carefully when going from one island to the next.

oblivion below. The commentator of the race, aptly named Larry "Supermouth" Huffman is especially amusing at these points, usually exclaiming "Holy Toledo," or "Wipe Out!" in excellent voice digitization when a wreck occurs.

Other possible hazards are the hairpin turns: beware when using the nitro booster here if you slam head-on into the guard rail your car will also explode!

The game can be played with one or two players. In both options there are also other cars racing against you. However one of the nicer aspects of the game is the computer-controlled cars don't play "gang-up" on the gamer. In fact, the other cars have a tendency to go after each other and not just the player. However they will take shots at the gamer, but they never use their numbers to their advantage.



Take too many hits and you'll start smokin' - and later go boom!

In the two-player mode, a split screen method is used with one racer on the top half, the other racer on the bottom half. Here, the two players can destroy and smash into each other as well as the computer-controlled cars.

Rock & Roll Racing is a pleasant departure from the "traditional" racing games with enough action to please about anyone. "Let the carnage begin!"

— Mike Weigand

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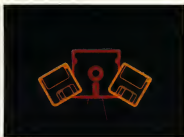
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SOFTWARE GALLERY



Rome: Pathway to Power

PUBLISHER	First Light/Maxis
DESIGNERS	Grand & Saunter
PLATFORM	MS-DOS
THEME	Adventure
MEMORY	4.6 Meg
PLAYERS	1
.....	
COMPLEXITY	Easy
GRAPHICS	86%
SOUND	84%
PLAYABILITY	82%

OVERALL 84%

How would you fare in a Roman Empire adventure?

It is often difficult to find introductory level adventures anymore. As audience sophistication increases, software publishers tend to push the outer edge of the envelope and eschew simpler designs that appeal mainly to beginning players who comprise a very limited segment of the market but an important one nonetheless. Today's rookies are tomorrow's veterans, and without them this sub-genre would decay over time. As such, it is refreshing to find a game like **Rome: Pathway to Power**, an elegantly designed yet not-too-difficult foray into ancient history that is bound to bring some new blood into the fold.

Players begin **Rome** as Hector, a lowly slave in one of the houses of Herculaneum. Unlike most slaves, who grumble at their plight and seek escape if possible

Hector has more grandiose ideas. He intends to better his stature from within, thumbing his nose at his Roman captors along the way until he eventually becomes Emperor. As this would be impossible if recognized as a slave, one of Hector's first goals is to change his identity. Remember, appearance is everything in a narcissistic society like Rome.

As the game begins, Hector is given a scroll by his master and told to deliver it to an official whose house is in the west end of town. He is easy enough to find as he stands outside in a purple robe awaiting the delivery. Don't be too eager to complete this quest, however, as it will set certain unalterable events into motion. First, take a look around and try to steal a little to line one's pockets for the journey ahead. Stopping by the Roman baths is also a good way to pick up a change of clothing and affect the aforementioned identity switch. When the area is scouted, go to the official and



An easy-to-follow skewed overhead view allows players to see more of the game.

deliver the scroll (for which he will provide a few sesteres, the currency of the period), then follow him as he goes about his business.

Anyone unfamiliar with Roman history and therefore clueless about the volcanic eruption that destroyed Herculaneum may begin to figure that it is time to get out of town when the sky darkens and

ashes begin to fall. The official leads Hector down to the docks where passage to safety may be purchased on a boat.



Detailed maps help Hector find his way through the Roman cities and towns.

Upon arrival in Rome, Hector quickly learns of a plot to assassinate the Emperor. Seeing this as an opportunity, he can either take justice into his own hands or find a way into the palace to warn the Emperor. Subsequent sections have Hector in command of troops in Britannia and Egypt (protecting Cleopatra from Ptolemy's armies) no less and vying for political acclaim in Rome.

Rome's display has a perspective similar to **Populous**, except the world is portrayed on a smaller scale. Hector is only able to see his immediate area and the screen scrolls as he steps to one edge of the square. All movement is controlled via a mouse and the player has the option of clicking on the display for detailed movement within a square using arrow icons in the corner of the screen for rapid movement between squares, or selecting an area on the map and sitting back while the character gets there automatically. The latter option is the easiest and should definitely be used to get to announced gatherings quickly, but one may miss certain things along the way such as NPCs with important pieces of information. Overall, the interface is easy to master and user-friendly throughout the entire game.

—Ed Dille



Space Quest 5: The Next Mutation

PUBLISHER	Dynamix/Sierra
DESIGNER	Mark Crowe
PLATFORM	MS-DOS
THEME	Adventure
MEMORY	8 MEG
PLAYERS	1
.....	
COMPLEXITY	Average
GRAPHICS	92%
SOUND	90%
PLAYABILITY	98%

OVERALL 94%

Dynamix operates on a team concept, eschewing the traditional departmental organization where a title would progress through the graphic design shop to the sound engineers and so on. The result is a more fluid, dynamic and ongoing interaction of all the individuals working on the project from start to finish. To affect this form of industrial brainstorming for **Space Quest 5**, Dynamix supplemented Mr. Crowe with its best artists, writers and programmers. The result of their efforts is a technically impressive, very polished tongue-in-cheek romp through the sci-fi genre. **Space Quest 5** employs electronic rotoscoping of live actors to achieve realistic body movements, and choreographs the action against hand-painted, digitized art work that rivals anything on the market. Further, the interactive musical score is impressive on a Sound Blaster 16 board and players will delight at the myriad of new comical sound effects that accompany Roger's misfortunes.

The opening of **Space Quest 5** involves Roger's enrollment in the StarCon Academy from which he hopes to rise in stature as a fleet Captain of the line. Little does he know that his first command will be an intergalactic garbage scow the SCS Eureka. Before he can have even that illustrious command, however, he must first pass the StarCon exam. Intelligence is not required as the questions and answers for the exam are ludicrous to the most casual observer. Luck should not be trusted either: the only way to ensure success is the old tried and true method—No, not studying—cheating.

While waiting for the test results to be posted, Roger can while away the time doing something familiar to him, cleaning up. During the sequence where he buffs the StarCon emblem, don't forget to put up those safety cones. Roger will meet the infamous pompous potentate Captain Raems T. Quirk, the first of many recognizable caricatures from more serious explorations of the genre.

When Roger leaves the Academy on



Once again, Roger Wilco will have to put his janitorial skills to the test!

the first of his scheduled garbage runs, it is natural that things do not remain dull and mundane for very long. Foul, literally plans are afoot to convert entire planets into toxic waste dumps. Roger must act as a sort of Toxic Avenger against the pukoids in the interest of truth, justice and general sanitation. If successful, he might be rewarded with a Sunday night prime time slot on the Fox network.

The puzzles and obstacles that Roger

Who says a custodian's life has to be in the pits?

When Mark Crowe left the two guys from Andromeda and moved to Dynamix, there was a fair amount of speculation concerning future installments featuring the signature character Roger Wilco. Even though Dynamix is part of the Sierra team, it retains its own individuality and sparks occasionally fly in the marriage of these two publishing giants. Rumor has it that Sierra executives placed strict guidelines on the content and execution of **Space Quest 5**, watchdogging the Dynamix development team during every step of the project. Whether these efforts were designed to aid or impede is open to debate. All that gamers need to know is that the end result is the best installment in the series to date.



Incredibly detailed graphics make this addition to the series a pure delight.



encounters range from simple to intricate, such as getting into the cloaking device housing. As always, Roger suffers severely when he screws up. One of the truly twisted facts about aficionados of the series is that they generally agree that these sequences are the "best" parts of the game, adding popular sarcastic humor to lighten the play.

Whether one agrees with this assessment or not, it will be difficult for anyone to pick out negative aspects of **Space Quest 5**, other than not wanting the game to end and having to wait another year or more for the next installment.

—Ed Dille



SOFTWARE GALLERY



Lemmings 2: The Tribes

PUBLISHER	Psygnosis
DESIGNER	DMA Design
PLATFORM	MS-DOS
THEME	Puzzle/Action
MEMORY	4 MEG
PLAYERS	1
.....	
COMPLEXITY	Average
GRAPHICS	89%
SOUND	87%
PLAYABILITY	96%

OVERALL 95%

Just when you thought it was safe to put down your mouse...

Lemmings has to be one of the biggest success stories in recent computer game history. First appearing a couple of years ago on the Amiga, **Lemmings** has successfully been translated for all major computer and video game platforms. The appeal of this game comes from its simplicity and premise. There are a handful of cute rodents that the player must save from committing mass suicide. In order to do this, the player can choose from different attributes to bestow on a lucky few Lemmings who then climb, dig, block, and even explode into a jillion self-sacrificing little pieces to insure the survival of their little friends.

Now we come forward to **Lemmings 2: The Tribes**. The designers at DMA have decided to give those anxiously awaiting this sequel something more than some

new levels of the same old stuff

Instead, they have taken the concept of **Lemmings** and raised it to the next level of gaming. Instead of having just one type of lemming, there are 12 Tribes to choose from. There are the classic Lemmings (the ones we all know and love), the Scottish Highland Lemmings, and Circus Lemmings. Medieval, Outdoor, Egyptian, BeachBum, Sports, Shadow (ninja), Cave-Lem, Space, and Polar tribes as well. And with the new types of Lemmings come all-new powers. Now there are over fifty to choose from, with such interesting choices as Surfer, Bazooka, Glue Pourer, Flame Thrower, Kayaker, Pole Vaultier, and SuperLem! The skills are scattered among the tribes and occasionally pop up in odd places.

It seems that Lemming Island is due for a catastrophe of sorts and that it must be evacuated before it is too late. Each of the twelve tribes must journey to the great ark being built to take the Lemmings away to safety. Also, they must deliver their tribe's piece of an ancient talisman to power the ark. If all of the tribes don't get through, it will spell the end of the Lemmings.

Now one would think that with all of these new types of Lemmings and skills, the game would get cluttered up, and that the simplicity of the original would get lost in the process. This was my main trepidation going into this game. What I found instead was a well organized and laid out game.

For those starting out, there are four practice levels where the player can choose any of the attributes (up to eight at one time) to practice and have fun. When it comes time to play the game, the player is given a map of Lemming Island and the tribes that occupy it. Any tribe can be picked at any time. For each tribe, the player gets 60 Lemmings to get through 10 levels of play. Any Lemmings lost during a level are lost to the tribe. The overall object is to get at least one lemming from each tribe through all



There are a variety of specialized Lemmings to use in the game.

ten levels and to get that tribe's piece of the talisman to the ark. For each separate level, players are rated by how many



Lemming Island has come into some trouble. Help the furballs escape!

Lemmings they manage to get through. If none of the Lemmings die, the player is awarded the gold medal for the level. If as few as one lemming bites the dust, the award goes to silver, and if a bunch of Lemmings meet their maker, a bronze is given. Past levels can be repeated for a higher rating. My only complaint with this system is that there are times when an *Exploder Lemming* must be used and that lemming sacrificed. This automatically takes the player down to at least a silver award for that level thus, making it impossible to get a gold rating all the way through the game. It would be nice if any Lemmings that were sacrificed for the good of the tribe didn't detract from the score. But this is still a minor grievance.

The graphics in **Lemmings 2** are very nice. The Lemmings themselves are still very small, but the animation is detailed enough to correct for this flaw.

The soundtrack is well done and there is a nice variety of music for the different tribes. There are also some excellent digitized lemming voices muttering such amusing things as "Geronimo!"

The key to the game is still playability. The new powers add depth to a great game concept. Other added features like the fan, used to blow floating and flying Lemmings around the screen, add new techniques to the idea. Though it seems that only having ten levels per tribe might make things small or easy, it should be looked at as 120 levels of game play. The levels remain challenging enough that the game will not be conquered too quickly.

Lemmings 2: the Tribes continues where the first one left off and manages to add more than most sequels dare to try. This one gets a big thumbs up!

— Marc Camron

SSSSSSHHHLLP

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SOFTWARE GALLERY

DUNE II

The wedding of A Dynasty

Dune II

PUBLISHER	Virgin
DESIGNER	Aaron E. Powell
PLATFORM	MS-DOS
THEME	Simulation
MEMORY	7.8 MEG
PLAYERS	1
.....	
COMPLEXITY	Average
GRAPHICS	92%
SOUND	92%
PLAYABILITY	92%

OVERALL 92%

The spice is the controlling force of the planet Dune.

The sand of Arrakis burns the soles of one's feet. The sun casts intense heat down from the unblinking eye in the sky, turning Arrakis to one large desert planet called Dune. The smell of spice is everywhere, mixed with the dry heat of the planet. Spice, the most valuable commodity in the universe, sought by everyone for its power to fold space, has more powers to expand the power of the mind than anyone ever imagined—especially for the one Savior.

In **Dune II**, Emperor Frederick IV pits the three houses—Atreides, Ordos and Harkonnen—against one another in a strategic economic and military struggle for the control of Dune and Its Spice. The game player chooses to take the role of one of the houses in directing a series of nine battles, the successful conclusion

of which wins the game. In each battle bases are built, defended, and destroyed. In the early battles, the mission success depends on harvesting a set level of Spice. In the later battles, all structures of the enemy must be destroyed

in order to win. Each successive battle is fought on a larger battlefield, with more powerful weaponry, and more powerful enemies.

The honorable house Atreides relies on diplomacy backed with the power of scientific weaponry. Ordos, the deceivers, use guile, wit, and deception to defeat their enemies by sheer power and ruthlessness. The Emperor eventually joins the battle on the side of the enemies of the chosen house, assisting them in their struggle until, in the final battle, the player faces the bases of the Emperor and the other two houses as well.

Like most war games, **Dune II** has five types of terrain that affect movement speed and combat effectiveness for various units. Eighteen different types of structures can be built, upgraded, and repaired at a cost of credits and time, in **SimCity** fashion, upon the rocky terrain of Dune. Windtraps power the structures. Refineries harvest and convert the spice to credits. Spice silos store the valuable



Your mentat will provide you with all the necessary information to rule Dune.

konnen Harvester is empty.



material. Production facilities produce structures and mobile units. The outpost keeps track of the limited intelligence on enemy and friendly structures and units in an overall battlefield map on the screen.

There are 20 different types of mobile units, from infantry to missile launchers and Fremen troops. Many units are specific to a particular house. Ordos has Saboteurs, very fast Raider attack trikes, and Deviator missile launchers, which allow them to temporarily take control of enemy vehicles. Atreides has Fremen warriors and Sonic Tanks. Harkonnen have Devastator advanced battle tanks, and "Death Hand" battle support missiles.

On selection of a house the battles begin immediately. Battles proceed with real-time combat, where multiple units can be given simultaneous orders. Units are intelligent and will attack anything within range, but for best effect of weapons and defenses, battles must be planned and continuously monitored. The house mentat, or military advisor, is just a pull down menu away for needed advice or help.

Graphics are in brilliant colors and sharp details. Digital sound effects, mentat's voice, and music are clear and effective in setting the scene and providing auditory cues to the battlefield action. Though most games have a downside, no fault could be found in this one. **Dune II** is a very high quality game of intense production values, fast action, and loaded with enjoyment for the war gamer, strategy gamer, or the many **Dune** fanatics.

— Alfred Glowetti



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SOFTWARE GALLERY



Creepers

PUBLISHER	Psygnosis
DESIGNERS	Hiebert & Vestergaard
PLATFORM	MS-DOS
THEME	Puzzle
MEMORY	1 Meg
PLAYERS	1
.....	
COMPLEXITY	Average
GRAPHICS	85%
SOUND	85%
PLAYABILITY	90%

OVERALL 90%

Even our smallest animal friends need a friendly push!

Boy, has Psygnosis grown in the past couple of years! **Lemmings** was the turning point for the British-based company but they had been producing excellent products for Amiga fans from their inception. **Lemmings** struck a chord in gamers because it had unusual, but simple, game play, puzzle-like levels, and lots of silly, cute sound effects and graphics. Designers Michael Hiebert and Steve Vestergaard recognized how appealing puzzles were to players and veered off in their own direction in **Creepers**—every bit as entertaining, challenging and addictive as **Lemmings**.

The goal of each of the 60+ levels is to guide a number of caterpillar-like Creepers into a butterfly bowl, whereby they turn into butterflies once assembled. Some levels have only one Creep-

er, but that doesn't mean success will come easily. The levels are grouped by difficulty: Easy, Moderate, Challenging and Brutal. These titles are a fair description of the levels. Players won't bang their heads against the proverbial wall until the Brutal levels, but each level still takes some thought.

Creepers start out in caterpillar form, but if they fall or get agitated, they curl up and turn into rollers. In some cases, it's better to have the Creepers as rollers, but in others they may be needed as caterpillars to slip through smaller spaces or provide time to set up tools. Fear not, gamers! You won't have to wait forever for the Creepers to crawl to a tool or obstacle; the fast forward button will speed along the game. The levels are not timed (although Creepers are released after a certain amount of time), but instead have an energy level that is worn down by 100 every time a tool is used.

Tools are essential to **Creepers** and part of the fun. A different selection of tools on each level can set up a path for the Creepers to follow to the butterfly bowl(s). There are only a few tools, but how they interact with the level's obstacles and environment determines their true effect. Horizontal girders block holes and act as bridges over pits. Inclined girders can help Creepers turn into rollers or help rollers get to a higher level. Vertical girders rebound rollers and block the crawling Creepers from further travel in that direction. Fans blow rollers in one direction and agitate Creepers enough to become rollers. Magnets attract Creepers and bombs blow up obstacles and girders. Finally, trampolines bounce the Creepers and another tool turns rollers into crawling Creepers once again. The best tool of all is the swatter. Click on the swatter and then a Creeper to make him bounce all over the place. This is fun in itself, but also helps

to get crawlers moving again as rollers. Use enough tools to get the job done without running out of energy and butterflies will soar!



The player has to race against time to prepare for the onslaught of Creepers.

Creepers's interface is similar to **Lemmings**'s, but it has one new feature, the Creeper Peeper. The Creeper Peeper is a window that pops up over the screen that acts as a camera tracking the released Creepers in their travels. Players can also set up a Point camera that focuses on one section of the level. These cameras are more useful in the larger two- or three-screen levels, but they are a neat feature for experimentation. Other functions are similar to **Lemmings**. Click on the tool icons or press their corresponding function keys to select a tool and then click on the screen where it is to be used. There are also icons for Pause, Surrender and Fast Forward. **Creepers** has passwords for each level; fortunately, they are only 10 characters long.

The graphics and sound effects are top-notch as they always are in Psygnosis games. **Creepers** has a cartoony look, with each level a mish-mash of colors and goofy enemies/obstacles. Some of these obstacles help the Creepers, others eat them or guide them to their

demise (in which they rise as angels on feathered wings, rather than butterflies on Gossamer wings). Sound effects and music throughout reflect the goofy humor of the game.

The obvious comparisons to **Lemmings** are justified, but **Creepers** stands alone. More like **The Incredible Machine** than **Lemmings**, **Creepers** is yet another winner from Psygnosis. **Creepers** deserves to crawl (or fly) all the way into a sequel!

—Russ Ceccola



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SOFTWARE GALLERY

CRUSADERS
of the
DARK SAVANT



Wizardry VII: Crusaders of Dark Savant

PUBLISHER	Sir-Tech Software
DESIGNER	D.W. Bradley
PLATFORM	MS-DOS, Amiga, Macintosh
THEME	RPG
MEMORY	5.4 Meg
PLAYERS	1

.....

COMPLEXITY	Hard
GRAPHICS	92%
SOUND	94%
PLAYABILITY	96%

OVERALL 94%

One of the most popular RPG series continues to soar!

The initial discovery for veterans of the Wizardry series is that **Wizardry VII: Crusaders of the Dark Savant** represents a quantum improvement in interface graphics and depth of play. The series



Ferocious battles with evil beings await all hardy adventurers in Wizardry VII.

has long been recognized for engrossing play value but this raises the expectation curve for future installments exponentially. Arriving some two years after its predecessor **Bane of the Cosmic Forge**, **Crusaders** proves to be worth the wait from the initial screen to its climactic conclusion.

Bane of the Cosmic Forge chronicled the party's efforts to recover a pen (the Forge) with the power to alter destiny once owned by the Cosmic Lords. Players of the previous game may import their parties to **Crusaders**, and they will begin with different knowledge and starting positions based on which way they ended the original title (there were three possibilities). A fourth beginning is offered for players who are either new to the series or did not complete **Bane**.

The fiction of **Crusaders** extends the existing story line both logically and chronologically. The Forge had been used by the Cosmic Lords to prevent the discovery of the world portrayed in both games, known as Lost Guardia. Once the Forge was stolen by the Bane King the planet's position was discovered by a mining vessel. Upon its return, news of the new planet spread throughout the galaxy. It was rumored to be the lost planet of Phoonzang, the legendary resting place of the Astral Domaine, a stellar globe encrypted with a deep secret powerful enough to either create or destroy entire universes.

Although many undertake the Journey to uncover this great secret among them the player's party) few possess the power and resources to complete the quest. A chief competitor for the party in the shared objective is the Dark Savant himself navigating the frontiers of space in his legendary black ship, mysterious and enigmatic, allying himself to no one. Experienced players will note substantial refinements to the play environment of **Bane**, all of which are significant.

Character skills have been expanded to include diplomacy, swimming, mapping,



climbing, firearms, reflexion, snake speed, eagle eye, power-strike and mind control. Each plays a part in different obstacles encountered, but diplomacy is important because it has effects on NPCs encountered. NPCs play a much larger role than ever before as most share the same objectives as the player and continue pursuing those goals independent of player interaction. Upon encountering a new NPC, the player must use diplomacy to establish some level of truce to allow the exchange of information (called the Lore option). Interestingly, this is now a two-way process, with NPCs learning everything the party knows when they convey their own pieces of the puzzle. This is a really nice refinement in that it forces players to consider who they want to exchange Lore with.

Other improvements revolve around the thief character and the actions required to pick locks and disable traps. **Bane** had already broken new ground in this area, with individual lock tumbler requiring manipulation. **Crusader** expands the model even further. Thieves will have to examine the individual components of each trap, recognize them for what they are, and disarm them.

Graphics are elegantly detailed, including landscapes and beautiful skies for the outdoor portions of the adventure. AI action takes place in first-person perspective, with combat and magical invocations illustrated via smooth animations. Puzzles are challenging but the player receives more than adequate reward for his perseverance. An even greater treat waits those smart enough to finish.

— Ed Dille

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SOFTWARE GALLERY



Betrayal at Krondor

PUBLISHER	Dynamix
DESIGNER	John Cutter
PLATFORM	MS-DOS
THEME	RPG
MEMORY	N/A
PLAYERS	1
.....
COMPLEXITY	Hard
GRAPHICS	98%
SOUND	96%
PLAYABILITY	97%

OVERALL 97%

The land of Medkemia is in need of a hero...

Betrayal at Krondor is an unusual step for the gang at Dynamix, who have prided themselves more on first-person perspective simulations than adventure role-playing games (Willy Beamish being the obvious exception). Nevertheless, Dynamix has a reputation for being a cutting-edge company and **Betrayal at Krondor (BAK)** is a true reflection of that philosophy. This extension of Raymond E. Feist's *Riftwar Saga* maintains such a devout allegiance to the original work, without being a straight adaptation of it, that the influence of the author on the design is evident in every nuance of the game. Further, the design team has expanded entire segments of the story line such as the magic system, which were only alluded to in the original work, in a fashion consistent with the feel of

the fantasy world Mr Feist created.

Pug, the master magician who was so powerful in the series that his presence in the game would be too decisive, has been removed (on a quest to find his daughter) for the sake of balanced game play. Chronologically, this places the events of the game between the volumes *A Darkness at Sethanon* and *Prince of the Blood*. The fictional premise of the game, for the benefit of those unfamiliar with the books, revolves around the land of Midkemia (the good guys), which is connected through a dimensional corridor with the land of Kelewan, home of the Tsurani (the bad guys). Everything is not black and white however, as Midkemia is comprised of several city/states that could rebel at any given moment—

and then there is the persistent problem of the Kesh. If one still hasn't gotten the picture then, simply put, it is this: the world is a very complicated place and anything, literally anything, can happen.

The first thing that players note is that the graphic presentation and interface of **BAK** is very familiar to **Drakkhen** (published by Data East). The player views much of the action from a perspective behind, and slightly above, the party. Also, movement occurs in similar fashion, using point and click directional arrows and taking advantage of bonuses for road movement. It is important to note, however, that **BAK** is even easier to manipulate in this respect than **Drakkhen** and more forgiving of poorly

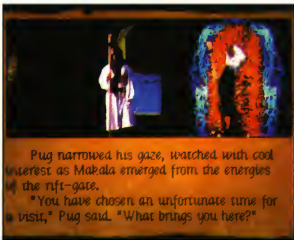


Evil and powerful beings will try to thwart your plans.

planned movement.

During movement in the great outdoors, it is possible to spy enemies lurking behind terrain waiting to ambush the unsuspecting party. This reinforces a lesson that is critical to success in **BAK**: be observant because there is nothing that is unimportant.

Some NPCs will not attack unless provoked and this usually indicates that



they possess information of worth to the party. Interaction is entirely driven by a point and click mouse interface but the player can influence the course of these set piece conversations by selecting from the option menu, which is updated based on the decisions made thus far.

When combat does occur, it is handled in a phased sequence keyed to character speed (similar to initiative in other titles). Yellow and blue rectangles denote enemies which may be attacked manually or via magic respectively. The magic system is also intuitive, with the player's spell abilities represented by symbology on a spell casting circle. The gamer may click on a symbol and receive a text description of the spell it represents, then may slide his pointer among the dots on the outside of the circle to determine the strength of the spell to be cast. Stronger spells require a greater commitment in health and longer recovery times.

Betrayal at Krondor is a grand adventure in every sense of the phrase. Players will swoon at the specter of Midkemia as Mr Cutter has recreated it and appreciate the reverence attributed to the original work.

Betrayal at Krondor shows some of the best work Dynamix has done to date

—Ed Dille



Veil of Darkness

PUBLISHER	Strategic Simulations, Inc.
DESIGNER	Event Horizon
PLATFORM	MS-DOS
THEME	RPG
MEMORY	5.9 Meg
PLAYERS	1
.....	
COMPLEXITY	Average
GRAPHICS	88%
SOUND	65%
PLAYABILITY	91%

OVERALL 90%

What evil lurks behind the hideous Veil of Darkness?

Poor (Enter Name Here). Not only does the plane crash into some godforsaken valley in the Carpathian mountains of Romania, but the inhabitants, most of whom are so nuts you wouldn't want to meet them on a street in broad daylight, are expecting the prophesied savior to rescue them from a vampire. Even after the player accepts that possibility (the prophecy is pretty plain, after all), these people ask for so many favors that it keeps the hero running to hell and back to fulfill them. And, the knapsack is getting heavy

Veil of Darkness

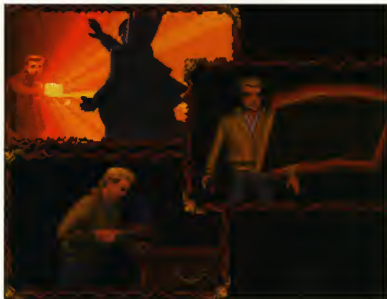
is a role-playing game that uses, instead of heroic fantasy, the Gothic horror of the forties and fifties as its basis. The opening sequence runs three or four minutes and sets up the story, but it can be cir-



Undead adversaries are just a small part of what awaits in the evil graveyard.

cumvented by the Escape button. Game play uses a three-quarters overhead, 3-D view and is best executed with a mouse. The split screen keeps the field of play on top. The mechanics of play—the larder where objects are kept, and the figure of the main character into whose hands the gamer puts these objects—is on the bottom.

The player explores from house to house, collects the things that need to be collected, and gleans information from gossipy townspeople. There are also bats, wolves, and other supernatural nasties to fight off. The level of battle, easy or hard, is set before the game begins. This is a nice feature, because it



lets the less aggressive player concentrate on mystery instead of mayhem

The on-screen hero can move from place to place in the valley by way of a map, but the different locations are

revealed only as the story unfolds.

Eventually the player will come up against the major nasty Lord Kaim, the vampire who holds the valley under his spell. The prophecy says that the savior will defeat him, and even how—but it takes some work. There is a clue book for the game, and the use of it is strongly recommended, unless you like banging around in the dark.



The complete and thorough inventory management system adds authenticity.

The graphics are very good, especially in the opening sequence, which looks a lot like a *Jonny Quest* cartoon. The background music is somewhat repetitive, but

at least it's different in each area. Sound effects, even an occasional wolf howl or bat squeak, would have been nice here and certainly would have added to the gloriously melodramatic atmosphere of the game.

This game is a must for anyone who likes vampires and werewolves. It takes a little time to master the intricacies of the play (but the clue book helps), and the process is a lot of fun. Thoroughly engrossing and complex, but not unnecessarily complicated, *Veil of Darkness* promises to involve


the player in the problems of this poor cursed valley. With a little help, poor (Enter Name Here) might even get out alive.

— Sara Slaymaker



SOFTWARE GALLERY

ULTRABOTS



Ultrabots

PUBLISHER	Nova Logic/EA
DESIGNERS	Butovitch & Seeholzer
PLATFORM	MS-DOS
THEME	Action
MEMORY	2.5 Meg
PLAYERS	1
.....	
COMPLEXITY	Average
GRAPHICS	96%
SOUND	94%
PLAYABILITY	92%

OVERALL 94%

The only hope to save humanity rests in the robot's armor.

Nova Logic has burst onto the gaming scene with the force of a mega-contender. Its first release, **Comanche: Maximum Overkill**, redefined the standard for graphic excellence in flight simulators. **Ultrabots**, the second offering, is equally hot in terms of graphic and sound presentation and, although not a complete breakthrough as a robotic warfare simulator, is a clean crisp addition to the genre that is bound to develop a devout following.

The reason behind the slight hedge in the previous statement is that **Ultrabots** lacks some of the detailed tactical finesse of **MechWarrior** in solo engagements. But it more than makes up for this minor oversight by including infinitely more strategic options for the thinking player

The background story that drives **Ultrabots** involves an invasion of Earth by mechanized warriors, the first wave of which could only be countered by Nuclear weapons. With Earth's arsenal virtually depleted and much of the planet's population as well, the only option for the remaining survivors was to go underground and duplicate the alien technology from remnants of the attacking robots salvaged from the rubble.

By the time of the second invasion the jumping-off point of the game, Earth is prepared to meet the aggressors on equal terms, qualitatively if not quantitatively.

Because the technology has been stolen Earth possesses the same three models of robots as the aliens, and humanity's success or failure will depend exclusively on the player's ability to maximize the limited resources at his or her disposal.

Players may refine their skills with the Scout, Humanoid or Scorpion robots by selecting training missions from the main menu prior to commencing a campaign. These robots correspond to light, medium and heavy attack classes respectively.



Complete repair facilities are available when your bot needs a good tune-up.

Once a campaign begins, the player selects individual "hot spots" from the map room as likely places of alien activity. This unobtrusive scenario menu contributes to the definite non-linear feel of the game.

Once a scenario begins, the player's objective is relatively straightforward: find and destroy the enemy. Because both friendly and enemy units look alike, an unfortunate circumstance is the frequent acquisition of friendly targets when hopping from cockpit to cockpit. In fact, one can spend a lot of time simply looking for the enemy in this game.

Proper use of assets is the answer to speeding this process. Scout units, though lightly armed and armored have

the advantages of speed and terrain masking. The latter refers to the ability of the unit, if employed in a tactically cor-



A direct hit! Your bot is equipped with the latest in destructive weaponry.

rect fashion, to hide behind undulations in the terrain and peek up over the ridge to find the enemy robots. After that, the player can quickly vector the heavier "bots into the area. Another nice addition is thermal imaging displays which can allow robots to pick out distant combatants from surrounding terrain.

The cockpit displays of the three robots are well organized and familiar enough between models to preclude the player from having to re-learn the basic locations of instrumentation.

A very nice feature is the ability to access a tactical map of the battlefield without losing sight of one's main view screen. In this manner, it is possible to anticipate impending engagements while completing prosecution of the current situation.

Also, it allows players to determine the best point in a battle to retreat severely damaged "bots within their own defense net and affect repairs (a much less costly option than losing the unit outright).

Ultrabots does not completely redefine the genre but it comes as close as possible without doing so. It combines elements of adventure, sci-fi action and wargaming into one neat package that players cannot avoid if exposed. And it possesses tremendously greater depth than **Cyber Empires** or **BattleTech**, lacking only the ability to target vulnerable areas in tactical combat as **MechWarrior** provided.

Ultrabots delivers, with integrity to the basic concepts which spawned the game and with an intensity that will delight aficionados worldwide. This long-awaited piece of software will not disappoint computer gamers. In fact, the packaging alone will undoubtedly impress just about anyone who looks at it!

—Ed Dille



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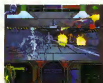
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CD GALLERY



ROAD AVENGER

PUBLISHER	RENOVATION
SYSTEM	SEGA CD
THEME	DRIVING
MEGABITS	N/A
PLAYERS	1
LEVELS	9
.....	
COMPLEXITY	Average
GRAPHICS	90%
SOUND	84%
PLAYABILITY	85%

OVERALL 86%

Revenge served up cold is the best option on the road.

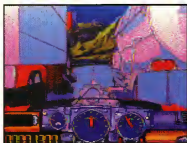
A young couple take a scenic drive through the mountains. They are very much in love and ride together closely as the road ahead disappears behind them. Then the serenity is shattered as a noisy gang tears up the highway, heading straight for them. The malicious thugs run the lovers' car off the road and in the crash the car explodes. The young man thrown from the wreckage, returns to survey the damage to find only a flower intact in the blazing disaster. There is only one thing to do...seek revenge.

This is one of the first CD games that really uses the power (storage) of CD technology to load the game with non-stop action in full color. To play the game is more like watching a color animated movie. The look is similar to Japanese style animations with a slight grit to it,

but the action is uninterrupted and the game is a living movie.

The game play is reminiscent of the arcade hit *Dragon's Lair*, which was the first laser disc game to gain popularity. In these types of games, the player makes single movements or button presses to correspond to on-screen action. There is usually some form of promotion or an indication of which is the correct response by either a flashing section of the screen or an arrow indicator. *Road Avenger* uses arrows and two symbols, one each for brake and turbo. For example, the car may be heading toward a wall and the player must press left or right at the correct time when the arrow appears to avoid a crash. In *Road Avenger* the four basic controls are move left, right, turbo and brake. These four simple commands can actually compose a large variety of action. A downfall to this style of play is that the game becomes patterned orientated and can be memorized by trial and error. Still, the single reaction lends to the overall enjoyment by allowing the player to see more of the screen action.

The overall game length is about 45 minutes, so there are plenty of well drawn scenes to keep the story going. During the adventure, you experience nine unique levels there are original death scenes for crashes, as well as superbly planned out stunts and trick driving. Also, each level features new



Here's animated action at its best with daring moves you'd never try on the road.

footage. Scenes aren't repeated over and over to save space.

Accompanying the intense animated graphics are good sound effects and an original theme song sung in a Tom Jones fashion. The sounds aren't quite as impressive as the graphics, but the CD format makes good use of them.

With a single motion as the tool for completing the game, people may think it becomes tedious or boring. Actually, the single response can take strict timing and the responses can be placed very close together to form a long string or pattern. In addition, if someone finds the game's built-in prompting (clue) of the movements too easy, they can be removed so it's all up to the driver and believe me, this mode is extremely challenging. As for the theory of repetitiveness, just forget it. The screen is so full of action scenes that people will be tempted to play it over and over just to see what they might have missed.

Overall, the game is geared toward simple game play and intense graphics. Not all types of people will enjoy this genre of game, but most will find the incredible stunts and crack-ups visually appealing enough to hold their interest. It's true that the patterns can be memorized but like any game, once you know the level's "pattern" it becomes easier.

The strong points are obviously the cinema-like graphics and uninterrupted game play. There is no slowdown or load time during the levels to interrupt the enjoyment. On the other hand, game play may prove too easy for wrist-twisting shooter fans. This will appeal to people of all ages and types. Even those who aren't into driving simulations can enjoy the pulse-pounding action and animation. With nine levels and multiple difficulty settings, *Road Avenger* can be challenging for the advanced and easy enough for the novice. Anyone with a taste for graphics can burn up the roads. Sharpen your reflexes and focus your eye or you'll miss some ultimate action.

Howard Grossm



Mad Dog McCree

PUBLISHER	American Laser Games
SYSTEM	MPC CD-ROM
THEME	Shooting Gallery
MEGABITS	N/A
PLAYERS	1
LEVELS	N/A
.....	
COMPLEXITY	Easy
GRAPHICS	91%
SOUND	82%
PLAYABILITY	94%

OVERALL 92%

The arcade laser-disc mega-hit comes to home computer.

It isn't every day that a full-throttle arcade twitch game makes the transition to CD-ROM format on the PC. As such, American Laser Games' computer conversion of its smash coin-op, **Mad Dog McCree**, is a glorious surprise. In a field jammed with multimedia encyclopedias, RPGs, and jazzed-up databases, the brainless barbarism of **Mad Dog**'s electronic gunslinging provides a needed respite from menus, maps, and mindbenders.

In the original arcade game, players used a light gun, molded in the shape of a six-shooter, to draw down on classic, Wild West villains. All the action was full-screen, full-motion video, shot especially by ALG for this game. Actors and stunt men played the parts of the townspeople guides and members of Mad Dog's gang against a variety of authentic-looking western sets. The novelty of a full-motion video gunfighting game in which real characters tumbled from horses, rolled off roofs, and dramatically shuffled off this mortal coil when shot, made **Mad Dog McCree** one of last year's most successful arcade games.



Mad Dog McCree gives players the chance to choose their own fate.

Mad Dog opens with the player riding into a small, dusty town on horseback and encountering a grizzled old prospector who establishes the plot: the town's been invaded by a gang of desperados under the leadership of the infamous Mr. McCree. The rascals have kidnapped the mayor and his daughter and locked up the sheriff, Barney Fife-style. In his jail

The town needs a hero, and you're it. The action that follows is stock western film—exactly what's called for in this type of game. The player-character must bust the sheriff out of the hoosgow, rescue the hostages, and face Mad Dog and

like. Even mid-range characters can blur if they aren't well-lighted. In one sequence, for example, a bad guy is holding a woman hostage as he waits along the side of a building in hopes of bushwhacking the player-character. The



Move the gun around and shoot fast. Make sure to save after each scene.

woman breaks free as the player approaches and runs along the front of the building. Unfortunately her image is so indistinct that it's impossible to determine her gender, much less whether he or she is a threat.

Mad Dog can be set at any of three skill levels and has even a practice option in which players shoot at bottles positioned randomly on a series of wooden posts. The main menu contains Save/Restore Game features, and the mouse makes a superb input device for drawing and aiming the pistol-cursor. Moving the pistol-cursor underneath the display area holsters the weapon, which can be reloaded by clicking on the right mouse button. Remaining lives and bullets are depicted as icons in the information area on the left side of the screen.

The player advances from one scene to the next through either menu selection (the screen is broken into four quadrants, each containing a different location), or by firing at the name of the town they wish to visit on the signpost.

Mad Dog McCree isn't "Hamlet"—it isn't even "Gunsmoke"—but it is a well-mounted production guaranteed to provide action fans with all the sound and fury they could possibly desire. It's also one of the most welcome diversions to visit MPC users since the dawn of computer CD technology.

—Arnie Katz



his boys in a climactic showdown.

This socially irredeemable material makes the transition to the computer CD environment in good shape. The video isn't quite full-screen—it occupies about two-thirds of the screen space, with the rest devoted to game data and option commands. There's almost half an hour of full-motion video, however including gunfights, exposition, and transition scenes, with everything presented from a true first-person perspective.

On the downside, when actors move too close to the camera, their images tend to break down and become block-

PORTABLE PLAYTIME



RAGING FIGHTER™

© 1993 KONAMI

Raging Fighter

PUBLISHER	KONAMI
SYSTEM	GAME BOY
THEME	FIGHTING
MEGABITS	2
PLAYERS	1-2
LEVELS	N/A
.....	
COMPLEXITY	Moderate
GRAPHICS	90%
SOUND	85%
PLAYABILITY	89%

OVERALL 88%

Portable fighting that will knock your lights out!

With the dramatic increase in the popularity of fighting games, it had to be just a matter of time before there would be fighting games for the portable systems. But, is there a way to cram the great



When in the tournament mode, the fighter who goes two out of three wins.

graphics, sounds, techniques and playability of the home versions into a hand-held package? Well, Konami has come close to doing the impossible with their new Game Boy title Raging Fighter



There is a good variety of both offensive and defensive techniques available.

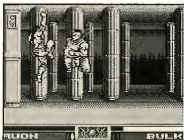
The player can pick between three modes of play: one-player tournament, two-player and story mode. In the one-player tournament, the gamer must fight his way to the top of a tower. He will encounter a new challenger on each level. In the two-player mode, gamers



Aska's ability to quickly launch fireballs makes him a very formidable adversary.

can duke it out with friends until their fingers ache. Finally in the story mode, the player must battle each of the fighters. The only catch is, when the fighter progresses to the next challenger he

retains the damage points from the previous match! If the player's fighter is eliminated, he will get a new one. However there are only three chances available, so tactics are important.



By learning the various special moves, you can stop your opponent's attack.

Each fighter is endowed with their own set of special moves. These special moves can be utilized by doing different control pad and button combinations. The fighters also have their own "Achilles' Heel" just to make things a little more evenly matched.

The game itself is a lot of fun to play. Each of the fighters' special moves must be learned by the gamer. There is actually a good deal of technique to master here. The graphics are impressive, and Konami has played it smart by making the characters big (almost 50% the height of the Game Boy screen!). There is very little of the trademark Game Boy blurring. The opponents are tough and the list of player options is quite decent.

On the negative side, the control is not the greatest. When playing against the computer, it seems that the computer has the ability to move much faster than your fighter. Keep in mind that this is not a home system, and Raging Fighter does its best with what's available. All in all, a nice effort by the folks at Konami. Raging Fighter is the best fighting game for the Game Boy to date.

—Mike Forassiepi

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HINT LINE!

KUNKEL REPORT

Welcome to the Next Level

by Bill Kunkel

"If you were color blind and had an I.Q. less than twelve, then you wouldn't care which portable game system you had. (Pause, close-up on a typical house mutt.) Of course you wouldn't care if you drank from the toilet, either."

—Sega Game Gear Advertisement

With those words, Sega became a certifiable, big-time player in the video game sweepstakes for the first time since the rollout of the SMS. For years, Nintendo's hip, hip-hop marketing (who can forget that classic Dr. Mario commercial?) helped the Big N bury Sega. Whatever the boys and girls from San Francisco came up with (remember: "Sega Does; Ninten-Don't?"), Nintendo was able to trump it, casting Sega as the perennial number two through its shrewd advertising and media manipulation.

Then, last year, Sega of America decided to change its ad agency. When word first broke that SoA was looking for a new marketing master plan, the wood-work began to empty. "Everybody went up to them with their slick portfolios," one longtime industry insider told us. "It was 'Here's what we did for Canon' and 'This is what we came up with for Nabisco.'" In other words, business as usual. Sega was looking at once again shelling out big bucks for a professional-looking campaign that wouldn't budge market share an iota.

Like, bleakamundo.

Then, arriving like the Young Guns, came Goody, Berlin & Silverstein. Unlike the other contenders, according to our source, G.B&S weren't resting on their laurels. Instead of showing Sega the campaigns they had produced for other companies, they showed Sega the campaign they envisioned for Sega. The ads popped. Something clicked with Sega. These were media bytes that really spoke to its prime demographic audience—ads that made Sega seem... cool!



If you were
colorblind
and had an I.Q. less than
twelve
then you wouldn't care which
portable you had.

In comparison, the best of Nintendo's TV advertising is clearly aimed at adolescents. These proposed spots were aimed at the *BH90210* and *Simpsons* generation: the teenagers and teenage wannabees who are the heavy duty electronic gamers.

Popular legend has it that G.B&S even went so far as to pull into the Sega parking lot the night before their presentation and chalk it up. When the SoA execu-

Instead of showing Sega the campaigns they had produced for other companies, they showed the campaign they envisioned for Sega.

tives arrived the next day, they stared at the ground as they locked up their BMWs, wondering who had played the practical joke. It was only when they reached the conference room and looked down that they saw that now famous message for the first time:

WELC
METOT
HENEX
TLEVEL

And if that story isn't totally true, it ought to be.

The rest is, of course, video game history. The Game Gear—recipient of the watershed water-from-a-toilet ad mentioned earlier—suddenly took off. Subsequently, Sega and many of the GG's third-party suppliers were kicking themselves for not producing twice as many pieces of each GG software title. And no one will ever be able to look at the Game Boy's sickly green screen monitor again without hearing a flushing sound.

The Sega CD drives, available in limited quantities, went in one door and out the other as soon as they reached most retailers, and Sega CD-compatible games and novelty programs such as *Sewer Shark* and the *INXS* rock video construction kit did comparable business.

Sega learned back in the days of the Master System that having a technologically superb video game machine wasn't enough. While the system was better, no one knew it. It had to be able to market its systems better than the competition. Nearly a decade later, it has finally begun to utilize that knowledge.

Welcome to the next level, folks.

—Bill Kunkel

Evil magic
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It wants.

Underground.

For the time
it can return to
claim its dominance

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THE JURY



Whatever their ages, our reader-jurors took off the kid gloves in judging the video game **Super Mario Kart** and the computer game **Dragons Lair III: The Curse of Mordread** this month. Each first place winner earns a free game from EG.

Super Mario Kart

Nintendo
SNES
1-2 Players

Winning Review
by Michael Powell

Take a spin with some old friends in **Super Mario Kart**. And with all the fighting and shooting games presently filling the shelves, Nintendo really hit on target with a game that practically screams "family fun for all ages."

As either Mario, Luigi or any of six of their old friends and rivals, you race your go-kart along circular tracks in the middle of nineteen of your favorite **Super Mario World** settings.

The game features multiple game play modes vs. the clock, savvy and aggressive computer controlled drivers, or another player, each with enough **Mario**-style power-ups to peak interest even in those with little use for traditional racing simulators. And unlike most two-player games, where unbalanced abilities lead to more waiting, watching and strained friendships than fun—**Mario Kart**'s two-



Race against popular characters from the Mario games in **Super Mario Kart**.

player modes keep both gamers going without cutting the challenge, while the high score board with battery backup still guarantees well deserved bragging rights to the winner.

Whether you play games to socialize, show off, or for solitude, **Super Mario Kart** will play over and over in your home.

Dragon's Lair III: the Curse of Mordread

Readysoft
MS-DOS

Winning Review
by Donald Richter

Readysoft's conversion of **Dragon's Lair** and **Space Ace** laserdisc arcade games have been very close to the originals. **Dragon's Lair III** consists of more scenes taken from **Dragon's Lair II: Timewarp**, including the *Wonderland* and *Beethoven* sequences.



Like the arcade game, **Dragon's Lair III** offers gamers incredible animation.

Dragon's Lair is again very close to the laserdisc coin-op. The animation is smooth and the audio, when used with an Ad-Lib or SoundBlaster, is phenomenal. There are drawbacks, however. I have yet to get the joystick support to work on any of these games, and once you figure out all the right moves, the entire game takes only about three minutes to complete.

If you are a fan of the laserdisc coin-ops, then you will like Readysoft's version of **Dragon's Lair III**. Otherwise, you may be disappointed.

The next **Jury** contest is to review **StarFox**, a video game that's already gathering unusual interest among game players. Please note—It is important to keep the length of your review to no more than 200 words! We have received some otherwise fine reviews that had to be disqualified for being too long. And don't forget to tell us which game you would like to win!

Join the Jury Review a game in EG's monthly contest!

Each month, **Electronic Games**' critics review dozens of new releases. They do a great job, but a lot of our readers are knowledgeable and perceptive about the games, too. Now, our unique monthly contest lets you strut your stuff. We'll pick a video cart each month, and challenge gamers to review it. Then, in "The Jury," EG will print the best ones—and give free software to the winner.

The rules are simple:

1. All reviews must be of the nominated game.
2. Entrants can submit only one review of each game.
3. All submissions become the property of EG.
4. Reviews should be 200 words or less, typed double-spaced.
5. The month's best review, as determined by EG editors, earns the writer the currently available video or computer game of his or her choice (sorry, no Neo-Geo carts).
6. The contest is open to anyone who has not sold professionally to EG within the previous 12 months (exclusive of this contest).

Game for Contest #9: StarFox

By Nintendo/For SNES

Deadline for this month's contest:

JUNE 1, 1993

Send entries to:

The Jury (Electronic Games)
330 S. Decatur, Suite 152
Las Vegas, NV 89107

STRATEGIC THINKING. KILLER INSTINCTS.



The only action game that requires strategy to win. The only strategy game that's hot enough to melt your armor. With the advantages of an advanced 3-D flight simulator, as well as a shrewd and cunning mind, you'll face the most ferocious intergalactic combat yet seen. *Mechwarrior*. One of the most original games ever developed.

It's the year 3027. Revenge is your motive. A Battlemech is your method. Outmaneuver, outsmart and outfight the Dark Wing Lance. Pursue every lead.



strategy can ensure victory. Use your missiles, cannons, lasers and jumpjets wisely if you expect to defeat your crafty foes. Your reward? More money to build more powerful 'Mechs, critical to completing your ever more complicated missions.



Perched in the central room of a 60-ton 'Mech, incredible 3-D graphics allow you to command the action. Use the practice mode and save game features to jump straight into the action. Whether you choose instant action or the rewards of an entire combat career, it's sure to make you sweat bullets. It's *Mechwarrior*

ACTIVISION®

PLAYING IT SMART

Help With Reading

by Joyce Worley

If every column I wrote were about learning to read, it still wouldn't be too much (though my editor might disagree). There is no skill more important; without mastering it, a person's life is blighted.

The software community offers a wealth of programs to help. This issue we'll look at a few of the latest ways to help your child learn to read.

Eagle Eye Mysteries, (EA* Kids/MS-DOS) casts young learners (8 and up) as junior sleuths, with a casebook of 50 crimes to solve, graduated in difficulty so that the program will stay challenging even for older kids. The player chooses an on-screen companion, selects a mystery to solve, then travels about town gathering clues much like it's done in any adventure game.

Information is automatically logged into the detectives' notebook computer. Once evidence is collected, the detective goes through the notes, selects the



Children can help Arthur with the many challenges of the first day of school.

clues to support any suspicions, and then accuses the suspect.

The quality of the production is tip-top, with first-person cartoon-style graphics. The adventure boosts reading skills, but even more important, it rewards deductive reasoning and comprehension. It's

an ideal educational tool for home use, since it's so much fun that the child will never know it's a lesson.

Arthur's Teacher Trouble (Broderbund/MS-DOS CD or Macintosh CD) is a reading lesson for younger learners. The interactive animated story is for ages 6-10; in this case, the lower ages are the most likely to be entranced.



An easy-to-use interface allows kids to closely follow the entire storyline.

The parent selects English or Spanish language, then the story unfolds. The program reads to the child, carefully intoning every word, or a more advanced student can read alone, and highlight any troublesome words for some computer help. Throughout the story, there are clickable hot spots on each page that make on-screen items come to life.

Music and sound effects round out the program. The story itself is a pleasant tale about the classroom and a spelling bee. But the real fun is clicking on the objects and people on screen to see the animations.

Arthur's Teacher Trouble is not complicated, but its undeniable quality makes it a valuable learning tool.

Knowledge Adventure has a similar product for kids who don't have access to CD. **The Tale of Peter Rabbit** (MS-DOS) is a talking storybook for ages 2 to 7. The child can hear it read aloud, with each word highlighted as spoken, or can read through the book alone. It supports

most popular sound boards, and it's a real treat for youngsters. This is a traditional teaching mode updated; having mother read aloud while tracing the words with her finger is the classic method for preschoolers to get an advance start. This update frees mother's hands for other work. As the learner goes through the 25 or so pages of the famous story, clicking on components of the on-screen pictures causes the program to intone the name of each object.

This beautiful learning program is sure to brighten the day of any youngster lucky enough to receive it.

StoryBook Weaver (MECC/MS-DOS & Macintosh) is for more advanced learners (ages 6-14), and may not seem like a tutorial at all. This great activity software is a teaching tool, however, since kids learn best through doing it themselves. Using the **Weaver**, kids assemble then print out their own creations. They select a border, write text with an easy-to-use



The tale of Peter Rabbit comes alive in Knowledge Adventure's latest release.

word processor, then pick scenery and objects to make up illustrations. Colors are changed by a click of an on-screen button, as in time of day. There are even songs and special sound effects.

Beauty sets this program apart from earlier book-maker programs for kids. This is bound to inspire creativity, while it keeps kids busy reading and writing without realizing that they're gaining skills.

LORE

Awesome Super Nintendo Secrets

J. Douglas Arnold, Sandwich Island Publishing, 307 pages (softbound, \$11.95)

The title and packaging set the tone for this amateurish approach to video game strategy. Compare cover and back page blurbs versus contents. Boldly printed on the cover of this installment in the Gaming Mastery Series is, "Secrets and Strategies for over 45 Games." On the back, this total is subdivided: "Complete Secrets and Strategies for 21 of the Hottest Games" and "Special Secrets and Quick Strategies for 22 Other Hot Games." So, 43 games is not over 45 but, so what...it's close, right? Wrong.

The second subhead is followed by a list of promised features, such as "all games explained completely through to the end." But this applies only to the first 21 games. In fact, the remaining 22 games are covered entirely in 4, count 'em 4 pages of text. Each title gets 2-4 lines of text with a couple of easter egg passwords, many of which have been previously published in magazines.

In all fairness to Mr. Arnold, although he praises the cover art in his introduction, it is possible that he did not have the opportunity to approve or disapprove the captions on the final packaging.

With regard to the 21 games that are given thorough treatment, some, like **Hook** and **The Addams Family**, are both timely and popular enough to fit the "Hot" description in the packaging. On the other hand, the book devotes fully 1/3 of its editorial space to **Legend of Zelda** and **Super Mario World**. Granted these are probably two of the hottest games, but they have been covered extensively elsewhere.

Finally, there are titles like **Hole in One Golf**, **Super Battletank** and **Super Off Road**. None of these have enough depth to warrant any kind of thorough treatment, which is evident in the text. For example, in the case of **Super Off Road**,

a full paragraph is devoted to explaining that, if one player gets too far ahead in a two player game it is nearly impossible for the other to catch up, so it might be nice to let them win a few races and be more competitive later on to "remain friends." This is not strategy coverage, it is vapor text.



Macintosh shareware games have grown in popularity and complexity.

Awesome Super Nintendo Secrets is not awesome at all. At best, it is a sporadic treatment of whatever games Mr. Arnold had on the shelf at the time he was asked to throw together a book.

—Ed Dille

MacArcade: Don Rittner's Top Shareware Game Picks

Don Rittner, Ventana Press, 264 pages (softbound, with 2 disks, \$27.95)

This lively, well-designed book could be considered simply as the compiled docs for 40 different arcade games playable on the Macintosh. All are

shareware, and available on the major online services for evaluation. Ten of the games are included, compressed on a set of two high density disks.

It is still hard to separate the wheat from the chaff in the shareware harvest available on bulletin boards and through user groups. This collection saves Mac owners much wasted effort. Games enclosed range from Oliver Dreer's beautiful (and maddening) **Diamonds**, a breakout type game that uses the 256-color mode and multi-channel sound, to **Continuum**, a black & white maze-shooter by Randy and Brian Wilson. **Solarian II**, by Ben Haller, is a space arcade game in the **Galaxian/Galaga** tradition, but even more fun. **BeamWars**, by Steven Crutchfield, is a simple-looking thriller resembling the motorbike game in **Tron**. Other games are **Glypha II** and **Gilder +** by John Calhoun, **Movod II** by Tony Small, **Space Station Photo** by Tad Woods, **SnakeTIX** by R.-Daniel Paris and **Piston** by C.K. Haun.

In addition, 30 more games are described in the book. The format for all descriptions includes an attractive cover page followed by an overview noting the title, version, author and address, registration cost, number of players, system requirements, machines the game was tested on, online service access and downloading time. A brief comment on game play is added, and usually a control diagram. The third page boasts a quick blurb about the game, followed by **The Scoop**—several detailed paragraphs describing the game. The fourth page has an Author Bio (sometimes including a photo) followed by a Hints & Tricks section that can range from a paragraph to another page of material.

The introduction includes Rittner's bio and explanations about shareware and its online access. At the end are ads and order forms for additional copies of the book and other Ventana Press publications, and ways to get the other covered games without a modem.

—Ross Chamberlain

TEST LAB

Pulling G's: In the Air and On the Ground

Virtual Pilot
CH Products
\$109.95

G-Force Yoke
Suncom Technologies
\$69.99

Control is everything! Ask any player, of any type of game, what factors irritate them the most and the number one answer on the list will be lack of control. If a game suffers from a poor interface or the peripheral the player uses is unresponsive or clumsy in one fashion or another, the result is dissatisfaction stemming from a loss of control. Players appreciate difficulty and challenge engineered into a game but not the unnecessary complications associated with poor design. For some segments of the gaming population, specifically fans of computer driving and flight simulations, this problem has been solved. Test Lab recently received two of the latest generation flight yokes that put all previous iterations of this type of peripheral to shame, CH Product's **Virtual Pilot** and Suncom Technologies' **G-Force Yoke**. Each has its merits and a few minor pitfalls, but either is capable of filling a definite need for players of these types of games.

The **Virtual Pilot** is the first installment in a planned series of peripherals catering to silicon based jet jockeys. Some players may recognize CH Products from their Flight-stick joystick, which was highly acclaimed because of its durability and adjustability. The **Virtual Pilot** is

equally well engineered to ensure that purchasers should never have to seek a replacement. At the entry level price point of over one hundred dollars, which will keep the peripheral targeted at the high-end PC market, it is definitely important that the **Virtual Pilot** is capable of withstanding considerable abuse.



The **G-Force Yoke**, by Suncom, offers a stable steering system for diving sims.

The **Virtual Pilot** system is designed to be mounted on the edge of a desktop using two attached, rugged plastic screw clamps that are recessed unobtrusively underneath the unit. Once properly installed, the unit is virtually immobile and holds up to substantial torque from abusive players. The unit is a foot wide and requires 8 inches of depth on the desktop for the control yoke to reach the fully depressed position (when diving toward the ground, for example). This might pose some problems for players with full size computers who work off of small computer desks like the prefabricated ones sold in many retail chains. Further, if one has a drawer or other impediment to mounting the unit as described, it is unusable.

Virtual Pilot has a precision control yoke similar to a real aircraft that operates the ailerons and elevators. Both controls have a self-centering response that simulates actual flying conditions. For example, if flying straight and level all trimmed out and one changes the pitch, roll or both, simply releasing the yoke would cause the plane to attempt to regain its previous level flying position. The elevator trim tab, located on the front face of the control housing (the player need not remove their right hand from the yoke to manipulate it), can be used to trim the plane to climb, fly straight and level, or glide when that pesky fuel gauge shows empty. This feature has more use in conventional products like Microsoft's **Flight Simulator** series than it does in dogfighting featured in any other product. The same applies to the aileron trim tab, which is conveniently located in a sliding groove on the front face of the yoke within reach of the player's extended right thumb. At the normal rest positions of the player's right and left hands are buttons which correspond to joystick buttons 1 and 2 for most games. The throttle control is a conventional "T" stick on the top of the unit but it is not supported by all games.

Speaking of support, at the time of this writing, the **Virtual Pilot** is supported by the following games: **Comanche: Maximum Overkill**, **Chuck Yeager's Air Combat**, **Aces over Europe** (only some features work with **Aces over the Pacific**), **Strike Commander**, **X-Wing**, **F-15 Strike Eagle III** and **World Circuit II**. Noticeably absent from this list is Spectrum Holobyte's **Falcon** series, the flight simulator with the largest dedicated following. Other products can use the joystick emulation features of the **Virtual Pilot** (ie:

The G-Force yoke and Virtual Pilot control systems each offer players good control and overall stability for flight simulations.

standard left, right, up and down) but the player cannot benefit from the peripheral's advanced features.

Later this year, CH Products will release **Virtual Pilot Pro** as a stand alone product at \$149.95. Owners of the original will not be able to upgrade or even trade in their VP system for the new model. They will be expected to shell out the full amount if they want to own the new features (bad marketing choice). The newer unit will add gear control and an eight-way cooly switch on the top of the housing. The latter is like a miniature joystick that simulates the position of the pilot's head. By toggling it the player can scan all of the cardinal viewpoints around the aircraft faster than other methods allow. The **VP Pro** system will come packaged with driver software for

suction cups for top mounting. Granted many of you have undoubtedly had bad experiences with other suction cup equipped peripherals breaking free at critical moments in the game. Rest assured that this will not happen with the **G-Force Yoke**. The center column offers the full range of motion without imparting any torque that would affect base stability.

The unit features a spring loaded self-centering yoke with both horizontal and vertical trimmer switches. Although these trimmer switches are designed to allow the player to correctly center the stick with various pieces of software, they can serve the secondary function of acting as elevator or aileron trim

designed to operate as two separate joysticks. The player need only select that option from the software menu and proceed. The **G-Force** yoke is also equipped with dual fire buttons for left or right handed operation. Both trigger-finger and thumb-tip fire buttons are located on each yoke handle and the center column has a signal selector that can switch the functions of the two buttons to suit the player's personal preference.

Both units were responsive and comfortable to operate in driving and flying simulations. Players will find that either is preferable to keyboard, mouse or even joystick control. Given their relative equality, in terms of durability, ergonomic design and responsiveness, potential purchasers must turn to other considerations to make their final decision. Suncom's **G-**



Microsoft's **Flight Simulator 4.0** as well. Other products in development include a set of rudder pedals to work in conjunction with either version of the **Virtual Pilot**.

Suncom's **G-Force Yoke** offers many of the features of the **Virtual Pilot** and some extras, all for a little more than half the price. The **G-Force Yoke** can also be mounted on the edge of a desk but, when installed in this fashion it is much less obtrusive than its competitor, because the heavy base portion is underneath the desk, not on top of it. As such, the player loses no desk top space whatsoever. Further, if one has a drawer or other obstruction which precludes edge mounting, the **G-Force Yoke**'s wide base comes equipped with four heavy duty

tabs on the fly. If used in this manner, however, the player must be aware that they are very sensitive and it may be difficult to relocate the zero point during the game without calibration. Because the unit does not offer dedicated aileron and trim tabs, only a jury rigged way of accomplishing the same function, it does not suffer the supportability limitations of the **Virtual Pilot** and works with more software.

A column-mounted linear potentiometer acts as throttle control. Unless one is very dexterous, it is necessary to remove one hand from the yoke to manipulate this control. Also, as before, not all software will support the throttle feature. Some simulation software is designed to allow speed control by using two joysticks. If this is the case, **G-Force** is

Force Yoke is more reasonably priced, offers greater flexibility in fitting in with the user's existing configuration and appears to be the logical winner. The only exception to this assessment would be if the player really valued the aforementioned cooly switch slated for the **Virtual Pilot Pro**. If so, the additional time waiting for it to appear can be well spent saving pennies and watching how many other software companies jump on the bandwagon to support it. If the cooly switch seems an unnecessary bell and whistle or not worth double the cost of the **G-Force Yoke**, get out and buy Suncom's product today. Pulling G's has never been this much fun!

—Ed Dille



Gaming On-Line

National Videotex

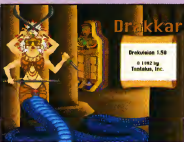
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\$5.95 monthly membership/\$6.00 per

hr. non-prime/\$9.00 hr prime

Portrayed as an opportunity to "Explore Strange Lands, Meet Exotic Beings, Confront Malevolent Creatures and Kill Them," the National Videotex network is relatively new to the scene as a multi-player gaming BBS (other, more conventional user options have been around for a while). Like any other expansion franchise, Videotex's success or failure depends on the talent they recruit to design and market the games section of their forum. Scouting reports indicate that some very wise decisions have been made in this respect.

Although his name is probably not a household word, Richard Mulligan made the move from the Genie network to Videotex as of March 1st. Mr. Mulligan was a driving force at Genie for the introduction of multi-player gaming to that network and he has managed to strike some promising agreements already at



National Videotex will soon offer many popular on-line games to its users.

Videotex. The first of these involves the grandfather of multi-player gaming on commercial BBS's, Dr Bartle. In 1985, Dr Bartle and a team of developers from Essex University in England perfected the first truly interactive multi-player game entitled **MUD** (short for multi-user dungeon). Most American players would not recognize this title, but may know the game through the CompuServe network. Several years ago, CompuServe licensed an early version of **MUD** and marketed it under the title **British Legends**. Mr. Mulligan has secured the rights to **MUD II**, which is a fifth generation improvement over the CompuServe version. Players will be amazed at the difference a few years of development makes.

The second major new project involves a large scale, non-conventional wargame based on the One Hundred Years War. For those unfamiliar with this period in history, it represented one of the most complex power struggles that has ever occurred among the aristocracy in Europe. The game will feature 150 possible starting positions for players and over 3,000 historically correct NPCs that may be hired or recruited into the various factions. Three lucky players will get to be the Pope, King of England, and King of France respectively. The King of England is an elected position and the others are randomly placed. The remaining players begin as one of the Lords or Ladies of the period and control from 1-6 fiefdoms initially. Each 24-hour turn represents 90 days of the war, so it is possible for players to survive the entire game and play daily for slightly more than a year! No one lives that long you say...of course, but the game requires that one invest time in nuptials to keep the bloodline alive. That, and every other possible action requires a portion of the 90 days represented in each turn. This means that a lot can be happening daily and the flow of power is as fluid and dynamic as it really was at the time.

Saving the best for last, the minds behind the game are powerhouses in their own right, Jim Dunnegan and Dr. Al



The Kingdom of Drakkar, from MPG-Net, will soon be available on Videotex.

Nofi. Mr. Dunnegan is the father of modern wargaming and Dr. Nofi may be familiar to readers of *Strategy & Tactics Magazine*, in the FYI column.

Additionally, Mr. Mulligan has concluded a lucrative deal with MPG Net (profiled in the April Issue) which will allow Videotex users to access all of MPG's games, including **Drakkar**, **Empire Builder** and **Star Cruiser (Operation Market Garden)** will be included later). The **Island of Kesmal** and **Galaxy II**, games which have existed for some time, are also available online. Another new development, which is exceeding Videotex's original expectations of online usage by leaps and bounds, is an ANSI-based casino area where players compete in **Poker** or **Blackjack** (with all of the standard accepted play variations). Finally, Videotex offers a massive shareware game area (1.4 gigabytes) with 800 titles and 15-20 new ones added daily. Users are welcome to download all they like at the aforementioned connect fees. (Note: Videotex's 9600 baud rate is currently the cheapest in the industry).

All of this activity implies a long term commitment to game players that can only serve to strengthen the industry through competition. Interested readers can receive additional information on how to connect to National Videotex and form their own assessment by dialing 1-800-336-9096. EG's commitment is to continue to monitor growing companies like Videotex and report their progress in future installments of this column.

Coming Attractions...

In the July Edition of Electronic Games

The Players' Guide to Adventures and Roleplaying

Adventures and RPGs are a little over 20 years old, and the legion of fans continues to grow. What's all the excitement about? This massive feature makes sense out of the product clutter in all media for would-be questers.

Fore! Handicapping Golf Games

The competition is more intense than the Skins Game when EG puts the top video and computer golf games side by side. We tell you which ones are pro caliber - and which are lost in a sand trap!

Games Go to the Movies

There's a highway stretching from the silver screen to the gaming screen. Get an advance look at major film-based titles coming for video, computer, portable, and multimedia gamers!

And Be Sure to Look For the Very Latest in High-End Gaming, Including:

- Power On!
- Feedback
- A Look to the East
- Insert Coin
- The Game Doctor
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- Video Game Gallery
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- Portable Playtime
- The Jury
- Playing It Smart
- Gaming On-Line
- Lore

and don't forget all the latest news and previews in **EG's Hotline!**

Look For All This and Much More At Newsstands June 22, 1993!

LET EG KNOW WHAT YOUR FAVORITE GAMES ARE!

We want to know what you're playing, and to receive your vote for the most popular game programs each month. Fill out your choices below, then send your poll sheet (or a photocopy if you prefer) to:
Electronic Games Reader Poll 330 S. Decatur, Ste. 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107

My favorite video games are:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

My favorite multimedia game is:

1. _____

My favorite computer games are:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

My favorite coin-op game is:

1. _____



Top Ten

reasons **NOT** to buy Tyrants™

Because I don't like lots of action and violence.

9 Because why should I waste my time arming my men with everything from bows and arrows to nuclear missiles and flying saucers when a **spitwad** is my weapon of choice?

8 Because I am a follower not a leader and I don't want to be the most **powerful** person in the world.

7 Because I don't like games that offer **months and months of game play**

6 Because the idea of **traveling through time** and conquering nine worlds merely tires me out.

5 Because I do not have a **loin cloth fetish**. Really.

4 Because I prefer wumpy cartridges that don't have **4 megs of digitized speech**

3 Because I don't like crossing swords with **devious conniving opponents** all ready to step on my baby toes.

2 Because I prefer blowing \$59.99 on a cartridge that's all talk, hype and no **action**

1 Because I am not worthy of an **adventurous resource management game** that makes other carts look like girly toys.

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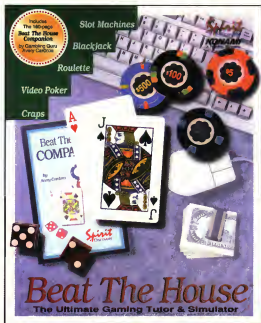
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